Aristophanes and His Tragic Muse

COMEDY, TRAGEDY AND THE POLIS IN 5TH CENTURY ATHENS

STEPHANIE NELSON

MNEMOSYNE SUPPLEMENTS MONOGRAPHS ON GREEK AND LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Comedy, Tragedy and the Polis in 5th Century Athens

By

Stephanie Nelson

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To my brother, James: always the dedicator, never the dedicatee

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Introduction

> Hegel remarks somewhere that all the great events and characters of world history occur, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.
>
> MARX, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

1 The Festivals and Genre

This is a comparativist work, but of a peculiar kind. I am comparing two things that are separated neither by space nor by time, since, from 487 B.C.E. when the first comic performances were staged at the City Dionysia, comedy and tragedy shared the same stage in fifth-century B.C.E. Athens and were performed at the same festivals. It should come as no surprise then that, as we shall see, the two genres tend to address the same questions, use the same oppositions, and evince the same cultural concerns. What may come as a surprise is that, as I shall argue, comedy and tragedy have a consistent tendency to emphasize opposite sides of any given issue. Thus, while Athenian comedy and tragedy are both concerned, as was the fifth century generally, with oppositions between *nomos*, or convention, and *physis*, or nature, comedy tends to stress the man-made aspects of things, while tragedy focuses on the relation of the human to a greater whole. While both comedy and tragedy question how far, as Solon puts it in Herodotus, "man is what happens to him" (1.32), comedy seems to accept wholeheartedly, while tragedy resists, the notion that human character and human life are purely contingent. And, in the opposition that I will be tracing throughout, while both tragedy and comedy share the deep interest felt throughout the fifth century in the relation of human freedom to a greater necessity, overall, as we shall see, comedy tends to celebrate freedom, in all its many contradictions, while tragedy explores how the human is bound by necessity.

In the case of Athenian comedy and tragedy of the fifth century, any difference of orientation cannot be due to cultural causes, since not only were the venues and audiences for the two genres identical, so also, as far as we can see, was the social background of the playwrights. But while the genres shared a common cultural setting, and even, by the fifth century, an approximately sim-

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ilar form (both employing three or four actors and a chorus, with episodes of action set off by choral lyrics), they appear to have had very different origins. Although we have only a shadowy understanding of the separate traditions from which comedy and tragedy emerged, there are enough clues to indicate how two originally distinct traditions, that then happened to be put together on the same stage, might have developed into the dialogic pair we find in the fifth century, at least until Euripides' experimentation began to conflate the genres.

It is a study that needs to be made. Although there have been innumerable studies over the years of Greek tragedy and of Greek comedy, there has been no book-length study of comedy and tragedy together.[1] Correspondingly,

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1 The closest, Gregory Dobrov's *Figures of Play* (2001), addresses specific tragedies parodied by Aristophanes, while Michael Silk, 2000, discusses Aristophanes' relation to tragedy in depth, but denies that the relation is generic. Slater's excellent *Spectator Politics* sees metatheater and the relation to tragedy through parody as basic to Aristophanes but does not discuss the relation of comedy to tragedy as such. Seidensticker, 1982, studies comic elements in tragedy and considers the separation of the genres, but does not put them together. Similarly, despite its title, Walcot's *Greek Drama in Its Theatrical and Social Context* (1976) focuses almost entirely on tragedy, while many titles that suggest comparisons, such as Markantonatos and Zimmermann (eds), *Crisis on Stage: Tragedy and Comedy in Late Fifth-Century Athens* (2011); Winkler and Zeitlin (eds.), *Nothing to Do with Dionysus?: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context* (1990); Scodel, *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (1993); or (although less so) Medda et al. (eds), *Kômôidotragôidia* (2006), are collections in which individual articles address one genre or the other. Sommerstein, in his introduction to *Tragedy, Comedy, and the Polis* (1993, 14), notes that only two of thirty participants chose to take the opportunity to compare the genres. Other works, such as Fletcher, 2012, Zeitlin, 1996, or McClure, 1999, include separate chapters on comedy and tragedy. Even in studies of Aristophanes' tragic parody the tendency has been to look at Aristophanes and not consider the tragedy in its own right.

To name only a few of the separate considerations of comedy and tragedy, Roisman (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy* (2014); Carter (ed.), *Why Athens?: A Reappraisal of Tragic Politics* (2011); Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering under the Sun* (2010); Norwood's separate volumes on tragedy and comedy (1931, 1948); Kitto's *Greek Tragedy* (1939); Lesky, *Greek Tragic Poetry* (1983, German original 1972); Rosenmeyer, *The Masks of Tragedy* (1963); Cropp et al. (eds.), *Greek Tragedy and Its Legacy* (1986); Silk (ed.), *Tragedy and the Tragic* (1996); Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (1986); Easterling (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (1997); Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (1988); Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (1987c); and for comedy, Revermann (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy* (2014); Marshall and Kovacs (eds.), *No Laughing Matter: Studies in Athenian Comedy* (2012); Fontaine and Scafuro (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy* (2014); Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy* (1986); Leclant et al. (eds.), *Le théâtre grec antique: la comédie* (2000); Dobrov (ed.), *The City as Comedy* (1997); Konstan, *Greek*

of the many studies of the *Poetics* published in the last century, few make more than passing reference to the fact that Aristotle apparently thought that the study of tragedy entailed a study of comedy as well.[2] And yet tragedy and comedy developed together and, particularly in the critical period of the fifth century, were nearly always seen together.[3] As an incidental joke in Aristophanes' *Birds* indicates—"And if any one of you in the audience was winged, / when he was hungry and tired and bored with the tragedies / he could fly back homeward for lunch / and when he was full, fly back to see us" (786–790)—at least in 415, one saw the tragedies in the morning and the comedy that afternoon.[4] The juxtaposition must have had a powerful influence. It is

Comedy and Ideology (1995); Harvey and Wilkins (eds.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes: Studies in Athenian Old Comedy* (2000).

For exceptions, see in particular Oliver Taplin's 1986 "Synkrisis," which, although not developed (and partially withdrawn), anticipates my argument here. See also Taplin's "Comedy and the Tragic," 188–203, in Silk, 1996, along with Bernard Gredley's excellent response; Rosen in Bushnell; Redfield in Winkler and Zeitlin; and, on a particular work, Foley, 1988, 33–47. For a mention in passing of the "organic connection" (26) between the genres, see Anderson in W.D. Howarth, 1978, and Adrados, 1975, in particular, 31–33, 353–365 for the argument pursued here. My agreement with Adrados' basic position that the genres first of tragedy and satyr drama, and then of tragedy and comedy tended to polarize does not necessarily extend to his other claims, as that drama originated either in agricultural festivals or in the *agon*. Silk, 2000, 97, and *passim* argues, unusually, against a general opposition of the comic and the tragic, but nonetheless sees Aristophanes as defining comedy through its opposition to tragedy. See Seidensticker, 1982, and Guthke, 1968, for a more general view that comedy and tragedy heighten each other's effect. For general studies of comedy and tragedy defining each other see Cook, 1949, and Kerr, 1967 (who, in a view opposite to that presented here, sees tragedy as essentially about freedom and comedy as reminding us of necessity).

2 The lost book on comedy is mentioned at *Rhetoric* 1.11 1371b35 and 3.18 1419b2 and indicated at *Poetics* 6 1449b21; for considerations see Janko, 1984; McMahon, 1917 and 1929; Halliwell, 1986, 266–276; Heath, 1989; Sutton, 1994, 13–15; and Cantarella, 1975, 289–297 for an unusual denial. For the relation of the *Tractatus Coisilianus* see Janko, 1987. At the most extreme, assuming that the *Tractatus* is merely a late exercise applying Aristotle's analysis of tragedy to comedy, it is worth noting how readily the extant *Poetics* allows for the application. For a history of views, Janko 1984, 1–4, esp. 3–4 for works on tragedy, comedy, and the *Poetics* that ignore the probable existence of a second book on comedy. See Rusten in Fontaine and Scafuro, 34–39 for a recent consideration.

3 For possible qualifications such as productions in *deme* theaters, see Chapter One, section one.

4 Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 64–66; Sommerstein, *Birds*, 248; Storey and Allan, 2005, 15–16. Storey, 2002, 211–212 argues that Eupolis fr. 205: "Every spectator must wake up / and cast from their eyes the nonsense from the poets this morning" also refers to tragedies in the morning

hard to imagine either a tragic or a comic poet not taking into account the fact that, whatever the particular play might be, the drama that his audience would experience cheek by jowl with his own would be that of the opposite genre.[5]

Even before we have gone into their development, there is a prima facie case for seeing comedy and tragedy as having developed an almost polar relation.[6] In general, the Athenian tragedy that survives is displaced, set in an epic and mythic context, while the comedy we have, even when it is set in Cloudcuckooton, is directly and *ad hominem* about Athens. Aristotle also assumes an opposition between tragedy and comedy, among other things seeing tragedy as depicting people greater and comedy people worse than their contemporaries (*Poetics* 1448a18). As Foley has shown, while women in tragedy tend to act for the *oikos*, or home, in comedy they act for the *polis*.[7] Tragedy, moreover, concentrates on the nonphysical, while comedy is more interested in food, drink, and sex; tragedy is concerned with the human relation to the divine, while comedy likes animals, particularly the ones that often made up the chorus.[8] And, in the clearest case of tragedy gravitating toward necessity and comedy toward

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and comedies in the afternoon; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 190, cites *Frogs* 376: "you've had a good lunch" as additional evidence. In contrast, Dunbar, *Birds*, 324–325, following Luppe, takes "return to us" at *Birds* 790 as meaning the festival altogether, so that the spectator would both leave and return to the tragedies—a much poorer joke.

See P. Oxy. 2737 for evidence of a fourth place comedy and Luppe 1972 and 2000 with bibliography arguing that the comedies were produced on a separate day throughout the war, as MacDowell, 1995, 9–11. Against Luppe see Storey in Barsby, 146–167; Mastromarco, 1975; Wright, 2007, 424–425; Slater, 2002, 290–291 n. 45, who sees the program as altered by 414. For a summary of evidence see Rusten, 2011, 101–102; Csapo and Slater, 1995, 107, and 135 for the papyrus fragment. The law cited in Demosthenes 21.10 alternates "comedy and tragedy" and "tragedy and comedy." Webster, 1965, is more extreme, arguing that from 450 to 415 only one play of each trilogy was acted each day.

5 For the importance of genre, Revermann, 2006b, esp. 115–117, on an Athenian expertise with genre; for cross-genre influence, Hanink in Fontaine and Scafuro; Konstan in Revermann.

6 See Seidensticker, 1982, 9–27; Redfield in Winkler and Zeitlin, 314–335: "evidently, the Athenians took some trouble to maintain comedy and tragedy as contrasting genres; it thus seems natural to investigate these genres jointly, as contrasting uses of the theater" (318); Adrados, 1975, 451: "the parallels of form and content between the distinct Greek dramatic genres are such that it becomes a methodological error to study the origins of tragedy or of any genre in isolation from the others." Lowe, 2008, 23–29 has an extensive list of aspects in which Greek tragedy and comedy appear as opposites and see overall.

7 Foley, 1982, 11.

8 For the comic effect on vases of depicting heroes interested in food, sex, and sleep, see D. Walsh, 2009, 223–232.

freedom, in tragedy, as we have it, death is ever present, while in comedy it is practically nonexistent, even when the play is set in Hades.

In the plays that remain to us there is a marked opposition in theatrical convention as well. The surviving tragedies tend to avoid, while the comedies delight in, self-reference; tragedy excludes, while comedy revels in, personal invective; tragedy adopts a "high," even Panhellenic language; comedy is colloquial, Attic, scatological, and obscene.[9] The material objects of tragedy, such as Clytemnestra's carpet, Ajax's sword, or Philoctetes' bow, are fraught with meaning; in comedy objects pile up on stage to be consumed, abused, and transformed. The impression of opposition seems overwhelming. And, particularly given the lack of any such contrast between, for example, Euripidean romance and New Comedy, the opposition seems to be located in a particular place and time: Athens in the mid-fifth century.

The relationship affects more than the history of theater. It is also a critical element in coming to understand the plays. Like many other classical oppositions, such as word and deed, form and matter, or divine and human, Athenian tragedy and comedy developed in such a way that they ended by both complementing and defining each other.[10] In such a relation, to understand one term one must also look carefully at the other. In the case of drama this is, on one level at least, clear to anyone. Athenian tragedy has not led anyone to conclude that the Greeks lived in constant fear of their gods, that they were unconcerned with the baser pleasures of food, drink, and sex, or that they spoke to their wives only on formal public occasions.[11] But if it had, a single play of Aristophanes would be sufficient to dispel the impression.

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9 See Easterling in Pelling, 1997, on the idiom of tragedy; Henderson, 1991a, on the obscenity; and Willi, 2002, 2003, on the question overall.

10 For polar opposites in Greek thought see Lloyd, 1966, and 90–94, 125–127 for opposites as not necessarily distinguished as contrary or complementary. Foley, 1982, 21 sees *oikos* and *polis* in the same relation: "a dialectical opposition [that] puts both poles into a relation in which each defines the other" and, in opposition to Shaw, 1975, as "a contradictory unity" or "symbiotic reciprocity," not "a simple, structural opposition." See Blondell et al., 1999, 50 for a similar relation between male and female; Mastronarde, 2010, 14–15 and C. Segal, 1981, 13 ff. on binary opposition in a structuralist context; duBois, 1982, and Vidal-Naquet, 1986a, for dichotomy overall; Vernant, 1988, 206 for the dramatic mask as expressing a tension between contrary terms. Heraclitus poses a similar relation for the human and the divine: "mortal is immortal and immortal mortal: dying the life of these, and living the death of the other." Finally, Wright, 2005, 22 n. 62 cites from *William in Trouble* the crossword clue for "doog: Oppossit of cat."

11 Hall, 2010, 4 cites Aldous Huxley: "tragedy omits all the everyday parts of life that dilute its effect."

A consideration of comedy and tragedy together also reestablishes a valuable sense of proportion. Greek tragedy is political, for example, but it is not political in the way that the extant comedy is. Similarly, while the question of whether tragedy allows for self-reference is a fascinating one, next to Xanthias' announcement that he is about to explain the plot to the audience (*Wasps* 54), the metatheater of the *Oedipus Tyrannos*'s "Why then should I dance?" (OT 896) is at best muted. Greek tragedy may not have Shakespeare's interest in character, but when set against figures like Philocleon or Peisetairos, who change form as the plot does, the interiority of Oedipus or even Agamemnon is striking. And, crucially, there is a huge difference in the ways in which the genres are dialogic. Tragedy is deeply involved with the life of its fifth-century Athenian spectators, and in this sense in dialogue with it. The dialogue, however, is a subtext, and in this way very different from, say, Cratinus casting Pericles as Zeus, or Aristophanes making a comic butt of Socrates. Similarly, while tragedy is in dialogue with other literary forms, it is important that the dialogue is implicit. Tragedy, does not, as comedy does, bring poets on stage to be cross-examined about their art.[12] At a certain point such a difference in degree becomes also a difference in kind. The fact that comedy explicitly declares itself to be in dialogue with the world around it, while tragedy does not, itself constitutes another opposition between the genres.

Finally, although this study focuses on Aristophanes, it enhances our understanding of tragedy as well. The City Dionysia was not a one-way street. As Adrados has argued, the effect of the pairing of tragedy and comedy in Athens was a polarization that occurred on both sides of the divide.[13] In the case of Aristophanic comedy, with its constant reference to tragedy, it is easy to see that the two genres need to be studied together. Tragedy, in contrast, is like an older brother who ignores the jesting sibling at his heels. Leaving the metatheater to comedy, tragedy takes no explicit notice of its fellow dramatic

12 As Sommerstein, 2009, 116: "Of the various Greek dramatic genres, Old Comedy was the only one which was able explicitly to incorporate within its scripts discussion of itself as an art form. Tragedy, and so far as we can see satyr play also, rigidly maintained the convention that the characters must speak and act only within the fictive situation; and in the fictive situation, belonging as it normally did to the remote heroic age, there was no such thing as drama on which to comment." For other instances of tragic poets brought onto the comic stage see J. Smith, 2003, 326 for Callias' *Letter Tragedy*, Platon's *Poets* 70 (Rusten, 2011, 341), Phrynichus' *Muses* 32 (Rusten, 2011, 330) and for the appearance of Homer and Hesiod, Cratinus' *Archilochuses* 2 (Rusten, 2011, 178).

13 Adrados, 1975, 44–64 and *passim* and Wright, 2007, for an interesting example of interaction between the genres.

form. Nonetheless, I would argue, comedy needs to be taken into account by any reader interested in Athenian tragedy. Tragedy, as many recent commentators have pointed out, needs to be considered within the circumstances under which it was produced. Not the least of these circumstances was comedy.

2 The Comic and the Serious

I argue in this book not only that comedy and tragedy each developed in contrast to the other, but also a linked proposition, that just as the meaning of tragedy lies in the tragedy itself, so also the meaning of comedy is located in the comedy. This, however, brings us to a problem. In setting itself against tragedy, comedy also set itself against the primary characteristic of tragedy, which is that it is serious (*spoudaios*) (*Poetics* 1448a2, 1448b12, 1449b24, etc.). Why then should we study something that was not meant to be serious? As Michael Silk has pointed out, the question stems from a largely semantic difficulty.[14] In English, as in Greek, the "serious" can be opposed either to the "comic" (*geloios*) or to the "trivial" (*phaulos*). Unfortunately, there is a tendency to conflate the two, and so assume that whatever is "not serious" in the sense of occasioning laughter is also "not serious" in the sense of being trivial.[15] The unfortunate consequence has been that scholars have attempted to find a meaning in comedy that is distinct from the humor.[16] Or,

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14 See Silk, 2000, 301–349 on the different senses of being "serious." Nightingale, 1995, 87–92 has a nice account of jockeying for the honor of being *spoudaios* rather than *geloios* in the *Gorgias*. For the application of humor theory to Old Comedy and Aristophanes in particular, Lowe, 2008, 7–12; Robson, 2006.

15 Foley, 1988, and in Revermann and Wilson, 19–27 attributes this view to the Athenian audience as well, and so views Aristophanes' inclusion of tragedy in his comedies as a way to have them taken "seriously."

16 For example, N. Wilson, 1982, 161: "in this play [the *Lysistrata*] the comic element is more than sufficient to undermine any alleged serious element in remarks relating to foreign policy"; MacDowell, 1983, 144 advises disregarding lines put in to make the audience laugh; similarly McLeish, 1980, 92 on the *parabasis*: "either it emphasizes the serious message which underlies the comic plot, or it is simply there for its own amusing sake."

Other scholars see Aristophanes as using humor as camouflage. Edmunds, 1987, 62 sees Aristophanes' engagement with the audience as "not simply for the sake of laughs" and points to topical allusions that "are clearly distinguishable from the medium in which they appear." Cartledge, 1990, 44–46 believes that Aristophanes' conservatism dictated "that the seriousness be masked by a variety of comic devices." Nichols, 1998, 213 goes further: "The

to put it more bluntly, it has led scholars to believe that one finds meaning in comedy by ignoring the comedy.[17]

In the case of Old Comedy, this misapprehension emerges most clearly in the way scholars have dealt with the *parabasis*. Too often the *parabasis* is taken as the part of the play where Aristophanes stops kidding and reveals his serious meaning.[18] In these readings the obvious humor of the *parabases*, such as the *Acharnians*' claim that the military advantage the King of Persia cares most about is which side has the better comedian (646–651), or the vehement foreswearing of comic techniques that Aristophanes is at the moment practicing (as *Peace* 739 ff., *Clouds* 537 ff.), are often treated as mere window dress-

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obscenity and scatology of Aristophanic comedy affords the audience a pleasurable relief … and cloaks in absurdity what may be an inflammatory political message."

Slater, 2002, 5 characterizes the controversy in its political context (see Chapter 3): "is Aristophanes 'just' a comedian, or is he 'serious' about something—which we will be able to find if we only peel away all the layers of comic camouflage?" He also points out that the difficulty in the view that comedy and tragedy are equally transgressive is that "it verges on turning comedy into tragedy pursued by other means" (6). See also Wright, 2012, 5–10 for a discussion of the difficulty of finding the "meaning" in humor.

17 As Whitman, 1964, 4: "The legitimate question 'What is Aristophanes all about?' has usually been interpreted to mean 'What serious message is Aristophanes trying to convey, albeit in comic form?' Such a proposition clearly makes the form a stumbling block to its own meaning." Among those who see the comedy as the point, many refer to an experience of "comic catharsis," as Sutton, 1994; Reckford, 1977. Reckford, 1978, 11–15 also sees this catharsis as leading to a comic recognition, following Barber's (1959) "clarification through release."

For other exceptions, Ruffell, 2011, 26–28; Henderson in Slater and Zimmermann, 91, points out that for Aristophanes a joke is no laughing matter, and in Winkler and Zeitlin (as Slater, 2002) that comedy gives serious advice precisely because it is comic. More generally, Bakhtin, 1968, 94: "Laughter is essentially not an external but an interior form of truth; it cannot be transformed into seriousness without destroying and distorting the very contents of the truth which it unveils"; Forrest 1975, 18: "from the fact that someone is not commenting seriously it does not follow that he is not commenting with serious intentions." Goldhill, 1991, 222: "The comic and the serious are not opposed in Aristophanes' writing but mutually infect each other's status."

18 Stanford, *Frogs*, xlvi: "Aristophanes generally used this part of the play [the *parabasis*] for expressing his own personal opinions on literature or politics"; Arnott, 1991, 18 sees serious advice "embedded" in Aristophanes' usual fantasy. Although the Hypothesis to *Frogs* and the late "Life of Aristophanes" see Aristophanes as honored for the play because of the *parabasis*, his overall ridicule of Cleophon, who was tried and executed in 404, is as likely a reason. The *Life*, after all, also informs us that "the king [of Persia] asked the ambassadors whose side the comic poet was on" (Rusten, 2011, 275). See also Sommerstein, 2009, 254–271; Dover, *Frogs*, 73–75; MacDowell, 1995, 297–300.

ing. In addition, scholars looking for Aristophanes' "serious" meanings in his *parabases* tend to neglect the fact that, other than a claim for his own superiority as a poet, the *parabases* contain remarkably few opinions of any kind, political or otherwise. As has recently been pointed out, rather than serving as an opportunity to be serious, the *parabasis* in Old Comedy seems to have formed part of an ongoing intertextual dialogue between comedians.[19]

Most importantly, however, the search for what is serious in Aristophanes has led scholars to neglect a crucial element of his *parabases*, which is their self-reflexivity.[20] This is the feature that Aristophanes generally opens with—as in the *Acharnians*' "so let's strip and start on the anapests" (627) or the *Women at the Thesmophoria*: "So let us then come praise ourselves in the *parabasis*" (785)—and that he tends to stress.[21] In all these cases the focus is the metatheater. As Rosen points out about Cratinus' self-portrait in the *Wineflask*, when the author puts himself into the play he too becomes a character.[22] This is also the case when, in the *parabasis*, Aristophanes' chorus speaks as the chorus of the play, telling the audience what Aristophanes thinks, or even more amusingly, solemnly advising them not to reject "our poet" (as *Acharn.* 633, 655) as if theirs was an objective and independent source of advice.[23]

19 See Biles, 2002 and 2011, for the *parabasis* as deliberate competitive self-presentation, shaped to the particular play. See also R. Rosen, 2007, who "discusses the tension deliberately created by such poets between self-righteous didactic claims and a persistent desire to undermine them, and concludes that such poetry was felt by ancient audiences to achieve its greatest success as comedy precisely when they were left unable to ascribe to the satirist any consistent moral position" (abstract).

20 The problem is exemplified in the numerous debates, cited in and joined by Sidwell, over Aristophanes' apparent frustration, expressed in his *parabases*, in not being able to write "sophisticated" comedy. At the extreme Sidwell (2009, 31 and *passim*) argues from Aristophanes' employing techniques that he condemns in the *parabasis* that his reference must be to other comedians. In contrast Platter, 2006, 94–107 points to the inherent ambivalence of the *parabasis* while McLeish, 1980, 91–92 (who, like Sifakis, 1971, sees Aristophanic comedy as non-illusionary) sees the *parabasis* as simply continuing the regularly shifting relation of audience and actors. As Halliwell, 2008, 254 n. 92 puts it, *parabases* are "exercises in mock-authorial role-playing."

21 As also *Peace* 734–736: "The stewards should beat any comedian / who praises himself, *parabassing* to the theater in the anapests. / But if it *were* right to honor someone ..."; and see *Knights* 503–506; *Wasps* 1008–1014; *Frogs* 674–685.

22 In Harvey and Wilkins, 23–40, and see Wright, 2012, 10–16; A.M. Bowie, 1982, 40; Halliwell, 1998, xliv–v and Freydberg, 2008, 92. For the *parabasis* as "as much an 'act' as any other part of the play" see von Steen, 111, in McDonald and Walton and Reckford, 1987, 187 for the *parabasis* as "a highly stylized, highly playful form."

23 Sifakis, 1971, 69 sees the *parabasis* as stemming from the chorus's "self-promotion and self-

Although a new level of discourse has been added, the chorus continue to be characters, whose implied independence from their author is the point of the joke. Similarly, when Trugaios reminds the audience that he could fall off the crane (*Peace* 173–174) and asserts: "I'm not joking anymore!" (173), his "seriousness" is part of the joke.[24] The same, I would argue, is true of the *parabasis*. It certainly expresses Aristophanes' opinions, but as part of, not in contrast to, the rest of the comedy.

In other words, the *parabasis* is essentially part of the play. It functions, both in its particular point and in its metatheater, to add another level of discourse to the drama. On a general level, as Bierl has pointed out, the slippage from the story line to the "here and now" of the theater recalls the audience's own involvement in the ritual of the play. But it is also the case, as he argues, that the particular *parabasis* is integral to the particular play.[25] In the *Acharnians*, for example, the chorus's declaration, in their own persons, that peace can come at too great a price (giving up one's comic poet, for example, 651–655) adds a level of discourse that is in direct opposition to Dikaiopolis, who has also been given the voice of "Aristophanes" (502–503).[26] In the *Clouds*, the chorus's disapproval of Cleon (metatheatrically identified as "Paphlagon" from the *Knights*, 581–594) is part of their attempt to stress their association with "real" gods, such as the sun and moon, or Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, and Dionysus (563 ff., 595 ff.). And in the *Wasps*, the chorus's portrayal of Aristophanes as Athens's ignored advisor (1015–1050) prefigures Bdelycleon's failure with Philocleon. In all these cases the involvement of the *parabasis* with the play should warn us against an attempt to find Aristophanes' "serious" meaning in some message separate from the play, and its humor, as a whole.[27]

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glorification," while Slater, 2002, 75–76 takes *Knights* 507–511 as suggesting the priority of the chorus to the poet.

24 In fact Aristophanes uses the same verb, *skopto* (173), in the *parabasis* of the play to describe the activity of comedy (740). For the humor see Olson, *Peace* 100, 218 and, overall, Halliwell, 1984b, 18–19.

25 Bierl, 2009, 310–314, and for *Women at the Thesmophoria* in particular, 186–220.

26 See Wright, 2012, 11–12 and Hesk, 2001, 268 for the way in which the *parabasis*'s picture of newfangled legal dealing colors Dikaiopolis' plea to the chorus.

27 For the connection of *parabasis* and play see Bowie, 1982 and 1993, *passim*; Biles, 2011, 9. Bakola, 2010, 31, discussing Cratinus, suggests that the association of poet and chorus "facilitates the diffusion of poetic voice to a degree that makes the *parabasis* proper only part of the process of poetic self-presentation—and sometimes not even the main one." Dover, 1972, 52 points out that the *parabasis* never addresses the main topic of the play (the *parabasis* of *Knights*, for example, does not mention Cleon), arguing against its containing Aristophanes' "message."

What is true of the *parabasis* is also true more generally in Aristophanes. Aristophanes is clearly not "serious" in the sense that he intended to make his audience laugh. But the laughter is also a critical part of a greater whole. Although there are comedies that create laughter purely for its own sake, just as there are dramas (such as melodramas or slasher films) that exist only for the sake of creating pity or fear, these are not the only kind of comedies. In Athenian tragedy our emotional response and the elements that create that response are important. Our horror at the self-blinding of Oedipus, for example, leads us into the heart of the play, and the elements in the play linked to that emotional response, such as the presentation of the blind Teiresias, are usually considered accordingly. One could not imagine a critic ignoring certain aspects of a play by Sophocles because they were "merely tragic," or dismissing a given effect because it was "only intended to create pity and fear." In the case of comedy, however, this is the norm. When looking at a passage in Aristophanes, it is common to conclude that the poet did not really mean this, but was only trying to make us laugh. The dismissal, as innocuous as it appears, distorts our view of comedy.

This book takes a different approach. Its argument is that Aristophanes does not merely put up with the need to be funny. Rather, as a musician works with notes and chords and a painter with color, Aristophanes works with jokes, and what he means is the work that he creates from them. This extends to the nuts and bolts as well. The plots of Old Comedy are discontinuous and fantastic, and the characters have no internal consistency and, nearly, no internal selves at all. In other words the comic poet does not need to worry about realism, consistency, or the interior lives of his characters. But these characteristics can be viewed not in a negative, but in a positive light. While the comic poet does not need to worry about consistency, he does need to worry about the fantasy, disruption, and exteriority that give comedy its meaning.[28]

As I hope to show, many elements in Aristophanes that have been disregarded as mere comic inconsistency in fact make very deliberate comic points. This is not to deny that other inconsistencies exist largely for the sake of convenience. In the *Wasps*, for example, which is interested in the contrast of youth and age, the chorus are led by their young children, despite the fact that as veterans of the Persian War (1075–1080) the old men must logically be in their eighties. Similarly the *Lysistrata*, which concerns the relation of men and women in marriage, simply ignores the possibility of other sexual outlets, while

28 Ruffell, 2011, 156: "Absurdist narrative is the way in which Old Comedy tells its story; it is also the way in which it makes its point"; and see 427–429.

in the *Knights* the "slave" Paphlagon is also a regular speaker in the Assembly.[29] In these cases, where the inconsistency is due to convenience, no attention is drawn to it.[30] Here, in fact, comedy does not differ that much from tragedy, which, as in the case of the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, can also be filled with improbabilities. The difference is that comedy, in addition to these "inconsistencies of convenience," also has instances where it deliberately calls attention to its own illogic.[31]

Many of Aristophanes' favorite comic moves, such as a sudden switch in register from comic to tragic, or the sudden substitution of an unexpected word, work precisely by calling our attention to discrepancy. The case is similar with many of his more important inconsistencies. Thus Aristophanes points out the contrast between Philocleon obsessively enforcing the law in the first half of the *Wasps* and as obsessively breaking it in the second by having him threatened with a series of lawsuits; in *Knights* the sausage seller's shift from vilest of the vile to savior of Athens is accompanied by the sudden fantasy of Demos regenerated as the Athens of old; and in *Frogs* Pluto (here an unexpected fourth actor) suddenly offers to send a poet home with Dionysus, reminding us of the long-forgotten plot that opened the play.[32] These discrepancies have been taken as due merely to the laxness of comedy. I will argue instead that Aristophanes draws our attention to them because they are a primary part of the drama. As in Auden's definition of comedy as "a contradiction in the relation of the individual or the personal to the universal or impersonal," or in Groucho Marx's "I would never belong to a club that would have me as a member," or in Aristophanes' "You will never persuade me, even if you persuade me" (*Wealth* 600), inconsistency and self-contradiction are not merely allowed in comedy; they are often the comedian's main point.[33]

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29 On *Lysistrata* see Dover, 1972, 160–161; MacDowell, 1995, 231; for the *Wasps*, MacDowell, *Wasps*, 10.

30 Scholars often take these as definitive, as Handley in Bremer and Handley, 100–101 who sees Aristophanes as tending to leave things indefinite, or Dover, 1987, 192 who sees him as sacrificing consistency to the moment. In contrast see Vaio, 1973, for thematic inconsistencies and Konstan, 1995, as revealing fissures in society.

31 For improbability in tragedy see Dawe, *Oedipus Rex*, 6–22 or Tolstoy on *King Lear* (Orwell, 1947). Peter Arnott, 1989, 162–188 sees the unity of story in tragedy as disguising an inconsistency left bare in comedy. For a study of how tragedy distracts attention from inconsistency, as compared with Homer, see Scodel, 1999.

32 See Dover, *Frogs*, 105–106 for the distribution of parts and Chapter 7 for Aristophanes' use of the inconsistency.

33 W.H. Auden, 1962, 371.

As these jokes make clear, one reason for comedy's interest in self-contradiction is its penchant for uncovering the contradictory nature of our beliefs.[34] Aristophanes, I argue, often achieves this by creating a deliberate ambivalence of response, for example, by encouraging us, simultaneously, to both relish the freedom of the comic hero and to condemn his absurdity. The term *ambivalence* is appropriate here in so far as it denotes the holding of two contradictory views at the same time.[35] Unfortunately, the term is not as suited in its more colloquial sense, where it can imply indifference or simply confusion. Nor do I mean the term as equivalent to the "ambiguity" that is frequently seen as characterizing comedy and tragedy both. I agree that both genres work with multiple levels of meaning, which is what I understand their "ambiguity" to refer to.[36] In the case of Aristophanes, however, I am arguing for something different. Tragedy may leave us with a resolution that balances precariously between reason and emotion, or the *polis* and nature, or the divine and the individual, but comedy encourages us to see one and the same object from two explicitly contradictory points of view, both of which, the comedy asserts, are true.[37] In a fractal-like relation, the technique mirrors the relation of comedy and tragedy within the dramatic festival. More directly it is a hallmark of comedy as such. Even the most ordinary childhood jokes (How do you know the elephants have come to stay? They brought their trunks) often point to two equally valid, but contradictory, meanings for the same word. Aristophanes' comic ambivalence just takes this basic outlook several steps further.

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34 As Silk, 2000, 422 (with reference to Kierkegaard and Pirandello): "[The comic writer] leaves open the possibility that alternatives, however absurd, *even if* absurd, *especially if* absurd, may be true, or true in a sense, or true too; and if this version of 'the world in its comic aspect' seems to be objectionably relativist, the comic writer can only contemplate a humorous response to *that* response too." Or, as Barber, 1959, 158: "To indulge dreamlike irrationality with impunity is, as Freud pointed out, one of the basic satisfactions of wit," and Huizinga, 1949, 3–4: "The very existence of play continually confirms the supra-logical nature of the human situation. Animals play, so they must be more than merely mechanical things. We play and know that we play, so we must be more than merely rational beings, for play is irrational." In contrast, Whitman, 1982, 44–65, 149 sees the comic hero taking from tragedy a search for absolute truth in an essentially existential world.

35 In contrast, Platter, 2006, 37 sees Aristophanes' essential ambivalence as intended to appeal to different levels in the audience simultaneously.

36 See Goldhill, 2009; Oudemans and Lardinois, 1987; and, for an argument against the centrality of ambiguity in tragedy, Seaford in Goff, 202–222. As Mastronarde, 2010, 26, all drama, including tragedy, is necessarily multivocal.

37 C. Segal, 1997, 349–393 sees a similar dynamic at work in the *Bacchae*.

Comedy does matter. In dismissing comic characters as two-dimensional, we forget that that two-dimensionality reflects, and comments upon, the vast majority of our social interactions.[38] In regarding comedy's metatheatrical tendencies as merely a joke, we ignore the multiple levels of meaning that we ourselves exist within at any given moment. In seeing comedy's discontinuity of characterization as simply comic license, we forget how many different and contradictory roles we ourselves play in the course of a single day.[39] In seeing the hodgepodge of the comic plot as a mere matter of convenience, we neglect the possibility that the narrative of our own lives is similarly cobbled together. Comedy delights in the self-contradictory and so can be very hard to discuss. But as much of human life is self-contradictory, I would argue that it is important that we try. Rather than regarding the laughter as extraneous to the meaning in Aristophanes, we should consider the possibility that it is the laughter that matters. Aristophanes intends to make us laugh, but what we laugh at may well be the truth in the joke.

3 Overview: A Developmental Study

The greater part of this work deals with specific plays and topics that bring out, I believe, the mutual dependence of tragedy and comedy. But since, as I have pointed out, we have differentia of neither space nor time in which to ground this comparison, these chapters are preceded by ones that explore the differentia we do possess, the clues we have to the disparate development of the two genres. It is important to remember that the categories of "tragic" and "comic" were not givens in pre-classical Athens, but rather emerging forms. Athenian drama did not develop out of the relation later embodied in the twinned masks

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38 As, in regard to tragedy, Easterling in Pelling, 1990, 99: "It is the very elusiveness of the 'inwardness' of other people, real or fictive, let alone of ourselves, that gives drama its extraordinary appeal." See also N. Grene, 1996, contrasting an "inner" self in tragedies such as *King Lear* or *Othello* to the socially constructed self of "secular" tragedies such as *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

39 Silk in Pelling, 1990, 166 cites the father in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*: "The drama for me, sir, lies all in this: in the conscience I have, which every one of us has—you see—we think we are 'one' with 'one' conscience, but it is not true: it is 'many,' sir, 'many' according to all the possibilities of being that are in us: 'one' with this, 'one' with that—all very different! So we have the illusion of always being at the same time 'one for everyone' and always 'this one' that we believe we are in everything we do. It is not true! It is not true!" (trans. Mark Musa, Penguin Books, London, 1995, p. 26).

of comedy and tragedy; rather, it created that relation.[40] In order to explore the opposition of comedy and tragedy, therefore, we must begin with what we can learn about their backgrounds. To this end various approaches to ritual, performance theory, and, as Rothwell says, the "cultural encyclopedia of the viewer" have proved useful.[41] As we will see in the conclusion, the relation of comedy and tragedy in fifth-century Athens reveals a culture that was itself multivocal and polycentric. In this light it is perhaps not surprising that this study has employed a similarly wide range of methodological approaches.

The central part of this work explores the polarity of tragedy and comedy by looking at how the different genres treat specific topics of interest in the fifth century. These chapters are introduced by an overall consideration in Chapter One of the development of the genres, including specific areas where the genres polarized: masks and costume, the chorus, the use of language, and the appropriation of the material world. In Chapter Two I go on to examine the emergence of satyr drama, a historical and generic moment that marked, I argue, the critical step in the development of tragic and comic polarity. Significantly, this link has been, until now, largely neglected. Just as there are almost no considerations of tragedy and comedy together, only a tiny percentage of the many studies of tragedy also consider satyr drama, and this at a time when the question of what sort of closure can be attributed to tragedy is under great scrutiny.

As any complete consideration of a subject this broad is impossible, I have selected a few representative topics for comparison. The sequence begins in Chapters Three and Four with a relation that lies at the heart of fifth-century concerns, that of the individual to the *polis*, and moves from there to the greater nonhuman setting that defines this relationship. Accordingly Chapter Five considers oracles, a place where the divine, the human, and the *polis* intersect, and Chapter Six looks at the relation of the human to the divine in the particularly fraught context of war. Each chapter begins with a short general consideration, goes on to consider, briefly, one or two tragedies for comparison, and then examines how, in contrast to tragedy, Aristophanes treats the topic at hand.

Although the juxtapositions I introduce here bring out, I believe, previously unnoticed aspects of the plays, I am not aiming at revolutionary new readings. Rather, particularly in the case of the tragedies, my aim is to show how themes

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40 Kirkwood, 1994, 10 points out that in fifth-century Athens, "tragedy meant a drama other than comedy and satyr play." Otherwise it meant simply "goat-song," as Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 112–124.

41 Rothwell, 2007, 4, with reference to Lada-Richards, 1999, 10–16.

that have long been observed become richer when seen against the background of the other genre. Thus in Chapter Three I begin with the *Oresteia* and *Bacchae*, tragedies that see the *polis* as a fundamental element within a greater whole. In the case of the *Oresteia*, this whole is congruent with the human world of the *polis*, while in the case of the *Bacchae*, I argue, it is because the *polis* is so fundamental that Dionysus challenges it. Despite the radical difference between the two, however, both set off the view of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, in which Dikaiopolis is able, with deeply ambivalent (in the sense previously described) results, to reshape a purely human-determined *polis* to his own liking.

Chapter Four, on comic and tragic characterization, then considers the individual and his or her place within the whole. The chapter contrasts Ajax and Medea, two tragic characters who set their individual wills against a world that threatens their obliteration, to the *Wasps*' Philocleon, a comic hero who affirms himself precisely through his disjunct and heterogeneous comic identity. Chapter Five then compares *Oedipus Tyrannos*[42] and the *Knights*, pointing to the divine localization of oracles in tragedy in contrast to their purely human localization in comedy, while Chapter Six, on the divine, looks at the relation of the human and the divine in Aeschylus' *Persians* and Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Birds*. Here I examine how even the near-contemporary conflict of the *Persians* is presented through a mythic and universalizing focalization of divine necessity, while Aristophanes' comedies introduce the gods into a contemporary political discourse of conflict only to reveal a focus, finally, on human freedom and its essential ambivalence.

Obviously, many topics have been left out. In particular, and largely because these topics have already been extensively studied both in tragedy and in comedy (although not in the two together), I have not explicitly considered the role of nature in the plays,[43] the relation of men and women,[44] or of *oikos* and *polis*,[45] or of rhetoric,[46] with the result that neither the *Lysistrata* nor the

42 Although in general I give the names of Greek plays in English, in this case both *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus the Tyrant* have false implications. For the importance, in various regards, of Oedipus as a "*tyrannos*" see Adams, 1957, 82; Knox, 1998, *passim* and 1979, 87–95.

43 See, for example, C. Segal, 1995, esp. 199–212; Rothwell, 2007.

44 See, for example, duBois, 1982; Loraux, 1993; McClure, 1999; Taaffe, 1993; C. Segal, 1981, 183–185, 192–194; Foley, 2001, 57–106; Zeitlin, 1996, in particular, 341–374.

45 See Gardner, 1989; Goldhill, 1992 and 1986, 69 ff.; Foley, 1982; Loraux, 1981; Seaford, 1994.

46 See O'Regan, 1992; Willi, 2003; P. Green, 1979; Redfield in Breyfogle; Harriot, 1986, 165–187; Bowie, 1993, 102–133; Edwards, 1990; Freydberg, 2008, 11–54.

Clouds is included. Also, as my focus is the fifth century, I have not looked specifically at Aristophanes' fourth-century plays, the *Assemblywomen* and the *Wealth* (Greek titles: *Ecclesiazusae* and *Plutus*). I mean no disrespect. These are wonderful plays and, I believe, thoroughly Aristophanic.[47] My concern, however, is a very particular time and place and a very particular relation of comedy and tragedy, which, after the deaths of Sophocles and Euripides in 405, was no more.

The final chapter of the book considers Aristophanes' explicit treatment of tragedy in two plays that take the relation of tragedy and comedy as their central theme. These are *Women at the Thesmophoria* (Greek title: *Thesmophoriazusae*) and *Frogs*. In both cases I argue, against the prevailing scholarly opinion, that Aristophanes' aim is not to demonstrate the superiority of comedy to tragedy, but rather to reveal the two genres as joined in a relationship that is both antagonistic and symbiotic. I also argue that in both plays it is precisely by virtue of this paradoxical relation that the two genres together serve as the lifeblood of the *polis*. As the focus of this work is the relation of comedy and tragedy it may seem surprising that I do not treat these plays sooner. The reason is simple. The argument of the study is not that Aristophanes enjoyed poking fun at tragedy (which is obvious enough), but that the juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy deeply influenced the nature of Greek comedy itself. As a result I have concentrated on the elements of Aristophanes that seem most likely to be generic to Old Comedy—the obscenity, the comic hero, the hero's triumph over the constraints of the city and of morality, the treatment of the material world, the political involvement of the plays, and the delight in self-reference—leaving Aristophanes' own explicit treatment of the relation of comedy and tragedy to the end.

The conclusion of the book returns to the place I began, now looking at the multivocal nature not only of drama, but also of the City Dionysia itself, a festival that incorporated comedy and tragedy into the political and religious celebration of a god as essentially self-contradictory as Dionysus. Here I consider once more the anomaly of the book's primary assertion, that two genres, identically located in space, time, and cultural aspect, can still serve as disparate perspectival angles from which not only modern readers, distanced in space and time, can view fifth-century Athens, but from which, even more critically, the viewers of Athenian comedy and tragedy were able to view themselves.

47 See, for example, Dillon, 1987b, and David, 1984, on how these plays address the problems of their time.

Athenian tragedy has, and with good reason, attracted the interest not only of classicists but also of scholars in many other fields, such as comparative literature, religion, history, and philosophy. Athenian comedy has not been as largely examined, primarily, I believe, for the reasons I consider here, that while tragedy in Athens positioned itself in terms of the "universal," comedy explicitly and deliberately grounded itself in the Athenian particular. Nonetheless, I believe it is critical for anyone with an interest in Athenian tragedy, classicist or not, to gain a genuine understanding of Old Comedy as well. I have tried, therefore, to make this work as accessible as possible to scholars in other fields, to graduate students, and to advanced undergraduates. Since my argument concerns a generic relation between comedy and tragedy rather than specific examples of intertextuality, I have had a wide range of tragedies to choose from. I have tried to choose tragedies that are commonly known and that often (like the *Oresteia*, *Oedipus Tyrannos*, and *Medea*) also have the advantage of being frequently referenced in the fifth and fourth centuries, and so may lay a claim to helping to define their genre.

As an aid for non-classicists, I have cited Greek texts in translation (which are my own, unless otherwise noted) and used translations, wherever possible, of Greek terms (as "entry song" for *parodos* or "producer" for *choregos*), although I have employed technical terms in the footnotes. In cases where there is no English equivalent, such as *parabasis*, I hope the non-classicist will consult the glossary. Presuming that the satyr dramas and comedies are less well-known than the tragedies I includes brief synopses of them after the Conclusion. Also, since it seems to me that the Latinized versions of Greek names (that is, Hecuba, not Hekabe, and Oedipus, not Oidipous) are still (marginally) more widely familiar, I have in general used these. My discussion of specific scholarly points has been deliberately confined to the footnotes, with the hope that the inconvenience occasioned to classical scholars is balanced by a greater accessibility to readers in other fields. And in order to make the already overwhelming bibliography slightly more manageable, it has been weighted toward more basic works and those done in English.

Let me end with a number of caveats. The present study, whatever its further implications, examines the relation of tragedy and comedy in fifth-century Athens. Correspondingly, the terms "tragedy" and "the tragic" and "comedy" and "the comic" as used here are merely shorthand for fifth-century Athenian tragedy and comedy; I do not mean to imply any universal theory of tragedy and comedy as such. This limitation also affects the meaning of the terms themselves. As is well known, the word *tragic* had very different connotations in classical Greek than it does in twenty-first-century English. A modern politician, for example, would be unlikely, as Plato does, to describe his state as the

true tragedy (*Laws* 817b). Unfortunately, the best English word for the "tragic" in the Athenian sense is probably the "serious," as opposed, clearly, to the "comic." For the reasons stated above I tend to avoid this term. As a result I am left with *tragic*.

Two final things. First: I do not believe it is possible, with the evidence we currently have, to know for sure how representative Aristophanes was of his genre. That he was grouped with Cratinus and Eupolis as one of the paramount comedians, just as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were grouped together, certainly suggests that he was not purely a maverick, and, as I will argue, his reference to tragedy seems too pervasive to be simply the result of personal whim.[48] Moreover, recent work on the complex interrelation and mirroring of the comic poets in one another's plays suggests a common approach and body of material.[49] It is also significant that as more research is done into

48 As Horace, *Sat.* 1.4.1–5; Persius 1.122–124 and see Storey, 2003, 1–6. In contrast Csapo in Depew and Obbink, 116 sees the choice as deliberately skewed toward the political. Silk, 2000, *passim* and in Harvey and Wilkins, 299–315 argues that a self-conscious self-definition against tragedy (as opposed to an institutional differentiation) was peculiar to Aristophanes, as Foley in Revermann and Wilson, 18–19. For contrary views, see Dover, *Frogs*, 24–28; R. Rosen, 1999, 166: "Callias' *Letter Tragedy* may, in fact, suggest that the comic trope of inter-generic rivalry with tragedy was more prevalent in the fifth century than we might have supposed" with further examples; Bakola, 2010, 119: "Whereas Silk's account of Aristophanes' use of tragedy is convincing, this degree of exclusion of the other comic poets, Cratinus in particular, from paratragic discourse is problematic. The question which immediately arises is why the other poets of comedy would not be interested in engaging with the most dominant genre of the Athenian cultural scene" and 177: "Plays such as Cratinus' *Ploutoi* and *Nemesis* give us reasons to believe that there was considerable engagement with tragedy in Old Comedy before Aristophanes. This conclusion is reinforced by evidence which suggests that others of Cratinus' contemporaries, namely Callias, Ecphantides, and Telecleides, also engaged with the tragic genre"; Marshall and Kovaks, viii, arguing that comedy "remained engaged with the genre rivalry with tragedy well into the second half of the fourth century"; Storey, 2003, 372–373 on the tendency of Cratinus to parody myth (creating a relation to tragedy), of Aristophanes to parody tragedy, and of Eupolis to avoid parody (although see 177–178 on the *Helots* as a response to the *Children of Heracles*). Platter, 2006, 36 sees the relation as "symbiotic"; for specific uses Rau, 1967; Schlesinger, 1936; Dobrov, 2001, particularly 14–26. I do not distinguish between "paratragedy," any use of the tragic register, and "tragic parody," its use for ridicule (as Silk in Sommerstein et al., 496–497, 502; 2000, 351 n. 2).

49 Ruffell, 2002, 188 cites, for example, a comic intertextuality "that permeates the narrative of Old Comedy from the level of plot to that of the individual joke." See also Biles, 2002, 2011; Bakola, 2010; Sidwell, 2009; and for a critique of Sidwell's rather extreme position, Ruffell,

other comic poets, such as Eupolis and Cratinus, the similarities between their work and that of Aristophanes become even clearer. The characteristics of Aristophanic comedy I discuss, such as contemporary reference, *ad hominem* attacks, metatheater, an interest in tragedy, play with words and dialect, an interest in the material world, a bending of the laws of nature and logic, and a focus on the physical needs of food, drink, and sex, are amply attested in the comic fragments of other playwrights.[50] However, since the topics I discuss have made it necessary for me to work with complete plays, my conclusions can be demonstrated only for Aristophanes in the case of comedy and for Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides in the case of tragedy.[51] Wherever possible I have used fragments from other plays and playwrights, archaeological evidence, and information drawn from sources such as vase painting and inscriptions to supplement my arguments. Nonetheless, this work depends primarily upon the limited number of complete plays that have survived. As a result my conclu-

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2002, 139–140. For a common tradition see Sandbach, 1977, 42–54; Harvey in Harvey and Wilkins, 112; and Heath, 1990, who posits a "common pool or repertoire of comic material" (152).

50 One area in which the extant comedies do not seem representative is the continuing use of myth in comedy, as Guidorizzo, 119–135 in Medda et al. and in Chapter One. Otherwise see Bierl, 2009, who uses Aristophanic comedy as evidence for Old Comedy overall, as 67–82; Revermann, 2006, 95–106 who concludes that Aristophanes is generally representative, particularly in his use of paratragedy (101–102); and Olson, 2007, 19 for the fragments' indication of a common dramatic structure. Storey (95–112) and Telò (113–131) in Fontaine and Scafuro discuss other comic poets' relation to Aristophanes and see Telò, 2007, on Eupolis' *Demes*; Storey, 2003, on Eupolis. Bakola, 2010, while protesting Aristophanocentrism, cites numerous similarities between Cratinus and Aristophanes. Rusten (ed.), 2011, and Olson, 2007, provide valuable work on the comic fragments.

51 For other comic treatments of tragedy see J. Smith, 2003; Bakola, 2010, 118–179; Silk, 2000, 49–50; as well as titles such as Hermippus' *Agamemnon* (Rusten, 2011, 165), Cratinus' *Eumenides* (Bakola 2010, 174–177), Alcaeus' *Komodotragodia*, Phrynichus' *Tragedians*, Strattis' *Macedonians* or *Pausanias*, and Strattis' *Kallipides* with its use of "*paratragodia*" (50), as also Aristotle's association of comedy with writers such as "Hegemon of Thasos, the first writer of parody" (*Poetics* 1448a13; Athenaeus 406E, 699A). Comic fragments that make reference to tragedy include, for example, Pherecrates *Krapataloi* 100; Eupolis, *Maricas* 207, *Prospaltians* 260, *Commanders* (*Taxiarchoi*) 268; Phrynichus, *Muses* 32; Platon, *Festivals* 29, *Poets* 72; Theopompus, *Odysseuses* 35, *Teisamenes* 61; Archippus, *Fish* 28; Strattis, *Anthroporestes* 1, *Phoenician Women* 47, fr. 71; Sannyrion, *Danae* 8. For various discussions see, all in Harvey and Wilkins, Bowie, 317–339; Lowe, 259–262; Harvey, 91–134; Braund, 151–158. It is also worth recalling that we often have only titles, and judging by the titles alone it would be difficult to ascertain that *Acharnians*, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, or *Frogs* had a thematic engagement with tragedy.

sions are subject to the continual caveat that we can only judge from what we know, and what we know is limited.

Second, and last: the topic of this work is a general one, and so subject to the difficulty that most, if not all, general statements are lies. I have undertaken this project because I feel that there is a value to pointing out the broad differences between tragedy and comedy—and the commerce between the two—in the fifth century. I am, however, acutely aware that just as there is no such creature as an average Greek, so also there is no such thing as an average Greek tragedy or comedy. Each tragedy and each comedy is individual, just as each viewer of any particular tragedy or comedy was individual. And just as the "meaning" of any given dramatic work must occur across the broad spectrum of those who view or read it, so also the dialogue of tragedy and comedy cannot be taken as that of one univocal voice with another. In the following work I attempt to keep this always in mind. Where I have not managed to avoid the problem of generalization, I hope the reader will take from the general claims what is useful and make for him or herself the exceptions that are necessary.

CHAPTER 1

Comedy and Tragedy in Athens

> "Hadn't time [to learn Fainting in Coils]," said the Gryphon: "I went to the Classical master though. He was an old crab, *he* was."
>
> "I never went to him," the Mock Turtle said with a sigh: "he taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say."
>
> LEWIS CARROLL, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

1 The Development of Comedy and Tragedy

Although evidence for the performance of drama in the rural demes of Attica is growing, it is clear that the City Dionysia and the Lenaia remained the primary venues for both comedy and tragedy.[1] This means that on the defining occasions when an Athenian saw comedy, he (or she) also saw tragedy, and vice versa. It also means that, by the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., both comic and tragic poets wrote for a venue that they knew included both genres. And just as comedy and tragedy were performed together, they were imagined together. As Plato would put it afterward: "It is impossible to comprehend the serious (*ta spoudaia*) without the laughable (*geloia*) or any of a pair of opposites without the other" (*Laws* 816d). In the case of drama, the reason was largely historical. Tragedy is thought to have been introduced in the City Dionysia in 534. Satyr drama followed sometime toward the end of the century. Around 486, as the festival became established as the major occasion of drama, comedy joined the scene. And by 440, when tragedy joined comedy in the other, lesser, Athenian dramatic festival, the Lenaia, the pairing of comedy and tragedy was complete.[2]

1 On the rural theaters, see Csapo, 2010, 83–116; Makres, 81–83 in Fontaine and Scafuro; and, for restagings, Mastromarco, 137–191, in Medda et al. See Biles, 2011, 62 and Whitehead, 1986, 215–216 for a decree from Ikarion from the second half of the fifth century mentioning tragedy. For productions abroad, as Aeschylus' in Syracuse, see Revermann, 2006, 19, 68–74.

2 See Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 66, 191–192; 1988, 40, 71–72; Dearden, 1–3 for dating based on the victor lists, and for a dating of the Lenaia to 442 for tragedy and 432 for comedy. Halliwell, 1997,

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The sequence is a significant one. Satyr drama is reported to have been introduced into the festival because tragedy now had "nothing to do with Dionysus."[3] Whether this is true or not, satyr drama certainly had everything to do with Dionysus, and also served, as we will see, as a foil to tragedy. As Demetrius of Phalerum was to put it: "Laughter is the enemy of tragedy. No one would think of writing a playful tragedy, since he will write a satyr play instead."[4] As a result, when comedy was introduced into the Dionysia fifteen or twenty years after satyr drama, it encountered a ready-made paradigm: tragic trilogy paired with its antithesis.[5]

I argue that under this influence comedy developed an extensive and far-ranging opposition to tragedy (and that tragedy, in turn, began to emphasize features we now identify as "tragic," such as displacement in time, intensity of characterization, and a focus on necessity). The similarities between satyr drama and comedy, as recently demonstrated by Shaw, go back to the earliest depictions of satyrs and comic dancers and make their parallel development natural.[6] The structure of satyr drama, which Taplin has described as "loose and

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xvii–xxi explores the importance of the pairing, the sharing of theatrical conventions, and the tension implied by this while West, 1989, 251–254 attempts to systematize the evidence. For an overview of the City Dionysia see Pickard-Cambridge, 1988 57–125; Parke, 1977, 125–136; Csapo and Slater, 2001, 103–121, and for other aspects Cole in Scodel, 25–38 and Goldhill in Winkler and Zeitlin, 97–129. For the Lenaia see Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 25–42; Parke, 1977, 104–106; Csapo and Slater, 2001, 121–138. For the overall perception of the relation of the genres, the law of Euegorus is telling (the date is unknown): "whenever there is the procession for Dionysus in the Piraeus and comedy and tragedy, whenever there is the procession at the Lenaion, and tragedy and comedy, whenever there is at the City Dionysia the procession and the boy's ⟨dithyramb⟩ and the *komos* and comedy and tragedy …" (Demosthenes 21.10; transl. from Csapo and Slater, 112). MacDowell, 1995, 10 takes the order of "comedy and tragedy" here as indicating the sequence at the various festivals, a far from necessary inference.

3 As Chamaeleon F 38 (Wehrli), Zenob. 5.40, Plutarch *Symp.* 1.1.5 and the *Suda*. Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 124–126 treats the proverb in relation to Aristotle's derivation of tragedy "from the satyric" while Seaford, *Cyclops*, 5–33, 1976 and 1981 works from the connection of satyrs to Dionysus. For possible origins of satyr drama, including the tradition that it was adopted from a Peloponnesian source by Pratinas, see the *Suda*; Flickinger, 1936, 23–24; and *contra* Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 67; Sutton, 1980a, 6–13. Hedreen in Csapo and Miller, 2007 traces a regularization of dance on satyr vases to the 560s.

4 *De Elocutione*, 168–169.

5 For satyr drama and tragedy see Bromer, 1959, 5: "Das Satyrspiel ist in seiner Blütezeit also nicht ohne die Tragödie denkbar, die Tragödie aber auch nicht ohne das Satyrspiel." The pairing seems, however, to have been limited to the City Dionysia (Csapo and Slater, 124) while the pairing of tragedy and comedy extended to the Lenaia as well.

6 Shaw, 2014. See also Bakola, 2010, 81–117 for links between comedy and satyr drama in Crat-

undefined," is like that of comedy; comedies could also use a chorus made up of satyrs; and many, perhaps continuing a tradition influenced by Epicharmus, had mythic subjects like those of satyr drama.[7] Like satyr drama, moreover, comedy tended to burlesque myth.[8] And, of course, like satyr drama, comedy had a persistent interest in the more physical aspects of Dionysus: drink, food, and sex.

Aside from the introduction of satyr drama, which will be examined in the next chapter, Athenian practice contributed to the relation of comedy and tragedy in another way as well. By the mid-fifth century, the two genres were performed in the same venue (or venues), on the same stage, before the same audience, and with largely the same dramatic conventions, such as the ability to present a god on stage or the assumption that stage space was "outside" and a platform wheeled through the central door of the stage building "inside."[9] But the structure of the Athenian dramatic festivals also kept the genres apart. Play-

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inus and Seeberg in Griffiths for padded dancers in vase painting giving way to satyrs and theriomorphic dancers about 550 as well as, in Csapo and Miller, Isler-Kerényi, 86–90 and Rothwell, 27–28, 224 n. 124, for vases where the two appear together. Sommerstein, 2009, 155–175 points to the prevalence of monsters and ogres in early comedy, also an important theme in satyr drama.

7 Storey in Harrison attributes two clusters of satyrs in comedy, in the mid-430s and 420s, to a response to Euripides' elimination of satyrs in his fourth-place plays, arguing a tendency in comedy to identify with satyr drama. See Rothwell, 2007, 27: "Yet satyrs possibly contributed to the emerging comic chorus as well. There was evidently some seepage between the different genres in the fluid, early period of development" and 91–92 for the overlap of comedy and satyrs, with a list of satyr choruses in comedy; Sutton, 1980a, 136 for other satyr choruses in comedy. For comedy's appropriation of satyr drama see Revermann, 2006, 103–104.

8 See Adrados, 1975, 355–356 on the similarity of comic and satyric titles and choruses. Comedy may also have moved from burlesquing myth to burlesquing tragedy, as Bowie, 1993, 317–339; Lowe, 259–272, and (for the introduction of women in particular) Henderson, 135–137, both in Harvey and Wilkins. Henderson in Marshall and Kovaks sees a third of Old Comedy as based in myth; Rusten, 2006 sees political comedy as late, perhaps entering with Cratinus. For Epicharmus as burlesquing myth see Cassio in Willi, 51–84; Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 230–288; Handley in Easterling and Knox, 115–118. Zagagi in Griffin, 1999, 177–218 stresses the similarities to comedy, for example, in Sophocles' *Trackers*. The uncertainty of judging from titles, however, makes it difficult to know. From their titles one could not tell that either Cratinus' *Nemesis* or *Dionysalexandros* (as the hypothesis, 4.140.44–48, tells us) was political (as Bowie in Harvey and Wilkins, 324–327; Lowe in Redmond, 1988, 42), nor that the *Clouds* was primarily a social comedy.

9 Rehm, 1994, 34. On a more basic level, the *Tractatus Coislinianus* lists the elements of comedy as "plot, character, thought, diction, song, spectacle," a list identical to the parts of tragedy, *Poetics* 1450a. See Janko, 1987 and 1984, 38–39, 60 ff., 84–86.

wrights in fifth-century Athens wrote either tragedy (including satyr drama) or comedy, but never both; they entered their works, explicitly, for either the tragic or the comic competition and had them performed by actors who acted and competed for prizes as exclusively either tragic or comic performers.[10] This distinction became so much of a given that Socrates could use the fact that the same man does not write both tragedy and comedy (despite his claim in the *Symposium*, 223d, that one could) as evidence for the importance of the division of labor proposed in the *Republic* (395b1).

Comedy and tragedy thus grew up together in Athens separate but juxtaposed. They also tended, primarily, to look to each other. Despite the links that both genres had to drama outside of Athens, aside from a few comic references to "Megarian jokes," neither genre engages explicitly with any non-Athenian influence. This may be because originally aristocratic, non-Athenian influences, as seen in the links between comedy and the symposium, were later rejected, or it may be because the Athenians usually preferred to see their culture, as well as themselves, as autochthonous.[11] Whatever the reason, Aristophanes situates his plays squarely within an Athenian comic tradition that stretches from Magnes to Crates to Eupolis, and sets it explicitly against Athenian tragedy. Similarly, when Euripides begins to introduce an element of self-reference into tragedy, it is references to other Athenian tragedians that he works with. It seems likely then that it was their Athenian counterparts to whom the creators of both tragedy and comedy were primarily responding.

Although the origins of Greek drama have, in Thucydides' phrase, "fought their way into myth" (Thuc. 1.21.8), the available evidence points to an important difference between tragedy and comedy, and one that may link tragedy, from the first, with a sense of necessity and comedy with a focus on freedom. There is a reasonable consensus that both genres began in choral performances—tragedy, as Aristotle claims (*Poetics* 1448a, 1449a), in dithyramb, while comedy had disparate origins, amongst which the *komos*, or drunken procession, was particularly significant (as the name, *komodia*, or "*komos* song" suggests).[12] The earliest illustrations of drama confirm this. For tragedy our

10 See Rehm, 1992, 18–24; Redfield, in Winkler and Zeitlin, 317–318; Lowe in Harvey and Wilkins, 266–269; and Sandbach, 1977, 13 on the actors. See Olson in Redmond, 65–74 and Sutton, 1987b for the tradition of comic or tragic acting in particular families.

11 For comedy's link to the symposium, Rothwell, 2007, 1–17, 35, 77–80; Bierl, 2009, 267–325. Silk, 2000, 43–44 sees comedy, from Aristophanes' point of view, as a "new" genre belonging to an exclusively "Greek continuum." Similarly, even Herodotus, who is intensely aware of the connections of Greek religion to Egypt and the Near East (as *Histories* Bk. 2), sees Homer and Hesiod as originating Greek ideas about the gods (2.53).

12 Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003, 141 ff., 172–177 expands upon tragedy's relation to dithyramb and

primary evidence is an Attic vase of approximately 490 B.C.E. that depicts a chorus moving with identical, stately, and invocatory gestures before a tomb.[13] For comedy, there are multiple kinds of comic dancers, reflecting in part the multiple forms of *komos*, including "padded dancers" from Corinth, Attic depictions of phallic processions, and images of animal choruses, all of which date to a period earlier than comedy's entry into the dramatic competitions.[14] In addition, and corresponding to the multiple sources named by Aristotle (*Poetics* 1448a30, 1448b30, 1449a10, 1449b5),[15] Megarian influence is substantiated by a reference to "laughter stolen from Megara" at *Wasps* 57 and in comic frag-

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comedy's to the *komos*, and see Pütz, 2007, 123–128 and, overall, Anderson 2003, 178–184. For the difficult connection with the statement which follows in the *Poetics*, that tragedy developed from the brief stories (*muthoi*) and comic language characteristic of satyr drama, see Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 89–95; Lucas, *Poetics*, 84–85; Seaford, 1984, 10–12; and Depew in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 128–132. See Connor, 1989 for an unusual view that connects the City Dionysia and tragedy not to dithyramb but to Cleisthenes' democratic reforms, and Sourvinou-Inwood in Osborne and Hornblower for a reply. For the dithyramb itself, which continued to be a main feature at the Dionysia, see Zimmermann in Sommerstein et al., 39–54, and for its origins Ieranò, 1992 and 1997. Shaw, 2014, 26–55 sees dithyramb, *komos*, and satiric performances as originally linked, while Nagy, 1990, 384–392 and in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 121–125 sees all four theatrical genres as originating in choral performance, which then differentiated into dithyramb and phallic processions.

13 See J.R. Green, 1994, 17; Csapo and Slater, 89–101; Csapo, 2010, 1–37; Taplin, 2007, 28–30 for a later depiction of a tragic chorus; Bieber, 1941, 529–536 for another vase perhaps illustrating the *Phoenician Women*. Dearden, 1976, 1–2 points to the Marmor Parium's claim that Susarion invented comic choruses, introduced into Athens in 580–560, and for "pre-dramatic" satyr choruses see Hedreen, 1992, 125–153.

14 See Csapo and Miller, 2007, 12–24, 41–47 and overall; Rothwell, 2007, 6–73; Trendall and Webster, 15–29 and, most recently, Csapo in Bakola et al. There are also traces of comic traditions in sixth-century Corinthian vase paintings of padded figures, for which see Bieber, 1961, 70–72.

15 For example Rusten, 2006, 41 n. 20: "Despite comedy's derivation from *komos* Athenaeus 10.428F–429A notes that some scholars alleged that the first drama to portray men drunk was by Epicharmus, and the first Attic one Crates' *Neighbors*." See Degani in Bremer and Handley; Zanetto, 2001; Halliwell, 1991, 294–295 and R. Rosen, 1988, and more recently in Bakola et al. for the link to the iambographic tradition, although Rosen's sense of comedy as conforming to generic conventions may be exaggerated. E. Bowie in Willi, 2002 suggests, against Rosen, that the traditions, originally separate, grew together. See Willi also in Willi, 7–12 for a bibliography both of anthropological links and of terms of abuse. Bakola, 2010, 70–79 has an interesting study of the links of the iambographic and comic traditions in light of Cratinus' *Archilochuses*.

ments from Ecphantides (frag. 3) and Eupolis (frag. 261), and rendered more likely by the Athenian control of Megara between 460 and 446, while the iambic tradition of invective, the mythic parodies of Epicharmus, and "the foibles of everyday characters" all seem reflected in Athenian comedy as well.[16]

If these are the origins of tragedy and comedy, both genres began with a chorus, but with a critical difference. Although dithyramb appears to have been a particularly fluid genre, and although most recent attention has focused on its processional aspects, the narrative element that distinguishes the few extant dithyrambs agrees with Aristotle's account of an origin of tragedy in *mikroi muthoi*, or "short stories" (1449a19), as well as with the early associations of dithyramb with myths about Dionysus.[17] This implies that tragedy, through dithyramb, had an original connection to narrative, while comedy seems to have emerged from a combination of different traditions, none of which combined the choral and narrative traditions.[18] In the case of tragedy the actors

16 For Megarian jokes see also *Acharn.* 738; Myrtilus 1; and Aristotle, *Ethics* 1123a24, on entering the theater in purple, as they do in Megara, with Olson, 2007, 3–5. Platter, 2006, 88–89 points out that the reference is always to vulgar jokes of which the comedian disapproves. The third-century historian Sosibus of Sparta (cited in Athenaeus 14.621d–f) cites a number of other Doric forms of comedy, including one performed in Sparta. See Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448a for comedy's links to Megara and Sicily (with 1449b5) and tragedy's to the Peloponnese and (both in Easterling and Knox) Winnington-Ingram, 1–5 for the origins of tragedy in Attic and non-Attic elements and Handley, 114–118 for earlier sources for comedy, as well as Giangrande, 1963 and Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 60–131 for tragedy and 132–193 for comedy.

17 For the fluidity of dithyramb see Wilson and Kowalzig, 1–28, and for a recent account of the connection to narrative, Lavecchia, 59–60, both in Kowalzig. Seidensticker (39 in Gregory, 2005) concludes that "the surviving texts and the many attested titles of lost dithyrambs at least permit us to conclude that the narrative of a more or less substantial portion of a myth stood at the center of the classical dithyramb," and such a firm connection seems likely to be traditional. See also Winnington-Ingram in Easterling and Knox, 2 for narrative in dithyramb and, in contrast, Swift, 2010, 22–26. Similarly Kowalzig in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 221–232 and 232: "In the Archaic dithyramb, the merging of myth and ritual seems to be central to how myth of the past is made relevant for the worshiping community in the present," and in contrast D'Angour, 1997, 347. Csapo and Miller, 2007, 8 distinguish between dithyramb proper, which was a processional song, and a circular chorus, a stationary theatrical performance, but point out that the two were not necessarily distinguished in popular speech and in Roisman, 928–929, suggest the movement to a circular presentation would allow for presentation of a narrative.

18 The scattered references to the origin of tragedy agree in associating tragedy with Dionysus and dithyramb, often linking it as well to Arion of first Lesbos and then Corinth. A late source reports Solon identifying Arion, the originator of dithyramb (Herodotus 1.23;

seem to have developed organically out of the original narrative, as in Aristotle's claim that tragedy emerged from the "small stories" mentioned above and from the response of the "leaders" (*exarchontes*) of the chorus to the choral song (1449a10).[19] We are also told by Diogenes Laertius that "in ancient times in tragedy first the chorus did the drama (*diedramatizein*) alone, but later Thespis invented one actor for the sake of giving the chorus intervals of rest" (iii.56). According to Aristotle, Aeschylus expanded upon this by using two actors to respond to the chorus, and Sophocles increased the number to three (1449a16). In later and more dubious evidence, Pollux declares that in tragedy "the *eleos* was a table in the olden days upon which in the period before Thespis someone mounted and made answer to the chorus members" (4.123).[20]

In contrast to tragedy, of the hundreds of disparate *komos* vases that may illustrate the origins of comedy, only one, the Corinthian "Dümmler" vase, depicts both a chorus and what may be a narrative scene, and even this identification has been doubted.[21] The implication is that while narrative was from the

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Republic 394c), as also the first to make "dramas of tragedy," while the *Suda* describes him as both the originator of dithyramb and the inventor of the "tragic mode" (*tragikou tropou*), for which see Rabe, 1908, 150; Lesky, 1961, 32–34; Flickinger, 1936, 3–13. Dithyramb's original association with Dionysus is evident in Archilochus' claim that he knows how, when crazed with wine, to lead the dithyramb to lord Dionysus (frag. 120, West), in Pindar *Olympian* 13.18–19, in Pratinas' description of Dionysus as "celebrated in dithyrambs" (*thriambodithurambos*, Kaibel 3:361.21), and later in Plato's description of dithyramb as a song honoring the birth of Dionysus (*Laws* 700b). Dionysus is also key in Herodotus' declaration that Cleisthenes transferred "tragic choruses" from Adrastus to Dionysus (5.67) and may lie at the base of Aristotle's otherwise difficult remark that tragedy emerged "out of the satyric" (1449a17), a comment supported by the *Suda*'s attribution to Arion not only of dithyramb and the "tragic mode" but also of "satyrs speaking in verse."

19 Lucas, *Poetics*, 80–81. For the relation of actor to chorus in tragedy, Winnington-Ingram in Easterling and Knox, 2–4 and for the significance, in this regard, of the actor as *hypocrites* or "answerer." Ley, 2007, 4–9 looks at the move from actor responding to chorus in Aeschylus, to actors responding to one another. See also Goldhill, 1986, 271: "Meaning in tragedy is produced *in the relation between* actor and chorus, scene and stasimon …" [italics original]; Taplin, 1978, 20; Longo, 12–19 in Winkler and Zeitlin and Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, 23ff., 34ff. on the chorus of citizens and the professional actor, with Plutarch, *Phocion* 30 and the Scholiast on Aristophanes' *Wealth* 953. Adrados, 1975, 98–130 sees the opposition of chorus and actor as basic to drama altogether, and see J.R. Green, 1994, 16–19 for the contrast of actors and chorus as influencing early vases. For a rather less likely view that the actor came not from the chorus but from the bard, see Walton, 1980, 35–56.

20 Flickinger, 1936, 18.

21 See D. Walsh, 2009, 167–168; Rusten, 2006, 44: "The growing body of research on the archaic

first an element of the tragic chorus, in comedy narrative and chorus derived from separate sources, with the narrative element possibly imported, as Aristotle suggests, from the Sicilian farces of Epicharmus (*Poetics* 1449b5), who seems not to have employed a chorus.[22] The individual voices of Athenian *komos* engaged originally, it seems, in invective rather than narrative.[23]

Thus, although the evidence is scattered and sometimes contradictory, there seems to be good reason to connect tragedy with a choral narrative honoring Dionysus, and comedy with a variety of sources, none of which combined chorus and narrative.[24] The difference is significant. As we will see, an origin in dithyramb, with its focus on narrative and emotional intensity, would lead easily into an emphasis on both unity and necessity in tragic drama. In contrast, an origin in multiple sources could well lead to comedy's readiness to break its

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symposium tends to conclude that its prime evidence, the dancers of the *komos* vases, do not suggest a chorus or a dramatic narrative but a sort of symposium, the crater or drinking horn being even more central than the piper. Thus, komast vases may have affinities with comedy, but they always seem to belong to a different type of performance." The discussion in Csapo and Miller, 2007 is informative: see figs. 84–85, pp. 214–215 and Carpenter, 44–46. Steinhart, 212–217 concludes that there is no dramatic scene while Isler-Kerényi, 81–82 points out that the vase is too idiosyncratic to provide evidence. Smith, 61 points out that the vast majority of komast scenes have no setting or context, while, 69: "In other cases [aside from the Dümmler vase] where we seem to have playacting, figures have been, in my view wrongly, associated with komasts because of their general physical characteristics." The Iolaos vase (figs. 73–74, pp. 202–203) is another possibility, but although the scenes overlap, the heroes and komasts are on opposite sides of the vase (as J.R. Green, 99–100), nor is Steinhart's view (199–202; Steinhart, 2004, 39–40) that the mixing bowl should be in the center of the scene necessary. The many depictions of the return of Hephaestus may be connected to satyr drama, as Hedreen, 1992, 2–4, 155–161, but do not imply a combination of chorus and narrative, just as the dwarf on the Boston ostrich vase (e.g. Bieber, 1961, fig. 125 a–b) has no necessary narrative significance.

22 See Olson, 2007, 6–11 and 8–9 for the absence of a chorus, as Rusten, 2011, 59 and contrary, Shaw, 2014, 68–71 citing Wilson's study (2007, 351–377) of other, independent Sicilian choruses. Heath, 1989 argues that Aristotle's claim implies that Crates introduced a structured plot while Pickard-Cambridge, 1988, 149 comments on comedy's original lack of order. See Olson, 2007, 11–12 on an independent Attic non-choral performance tradition added to a chorus under the influence of the Corinthian padded dancers and R. Rosen, 1988, Heath, 1990, and Ruffell, 2002, 148 on a plot-based form of comedy merging with an original invective-fueled version. Lowe, 2008, 6 sees a series of comic moments as gradually scaling up into a narrative at least partially under the influence of tragedy (28–29).

23 See Halliwell, 2008, 171–172, 177–181, 228–229; Willi in Revermann, 175.

24 Olson, 2007, 12. Bierl, 327: "The chorus, or *komos*, represents the ritual foundation of comedy, around which a comic plot that tends to be episodic in nature is entwined."

narrative thread and to its tendency toward the centrifugal, the decentralized, and the polyphonic.[25] Even more significantly, a link to the licensed abuse of the *komos* would connect comedy to an escape from restraint, as would other elements associated with the *komos*, such as the psychological release associated with otherwise banned words and topics.[26]

Finally, the emergence of tragedy from dithyramb may also have had another, tangential influence on the relation of tragedy and comedy. By 508, around the same time as the introduction of satyr drama into the City Dionysia, tragedy and dithyramb were sufficiently distinct that dithyramb was introduced into the festival as a separate competition. Comedy took little notice. When it entered into the competition thirty years later, it seems to have gone directly for tragedy. While references to tragedy are pervasive in the extant comedies, dithyramb is mocked largely for the "ethereal" nature of the new music. The fragments of comedy that we possess show a similar interest in tragedy rather than dithyramb.[27]

Comedy may have focused on tragedy because the elements of dithyramb that it tended to target, such as high-flown language or mythic stories, were already present in the more easily assimilable genre of tragedy. Another reason may be that the dithyrambic competition had found a political niche that was not readily approachable. Organized to reinforce Cleisthenes' democratic division of tribes, and engaging five hundred citizen men and an equal number of boys each year, the competition, whether or not it brought the various classes within the tribes together, would certainly have established tribal solidarity.[28]

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25 See Platter, 1993, 201; 2006, 37.

26 For the tie to traditional ritual abuse see Halliwell, 2008, 155–214; Harvey in Harvey and Wilkins, 95–100; Goldhill, 1991, 185 (with further bibliography); and Hoffman, 1989 for the ritual license of the *komos* and its connection to Turner's categories of *liminality* and *communitas*. Halliwell, 1984b, 7–8 links this to a festival release from hierarchy, while Cole in Scodel, 1993, 25–38 sees the same in the phallic procession itself. R. Rosen, 2007, 29 points to *Frogs* 368–376 as evidence of Aristophanes' awareness of the link between literary and religious mockery. For the ongoing discussion of the extent and source of comedy's freedom to abuse citizens see Henderson, 1991, 11–12, 33–34; Csapo and Slater, 165–171 and 415–416 for a bibliography. Such a release is, of course, the essence of humor for Freud, as 1960, 205–223; Halliwell in Revermann.

27 See Ley, 2007, 173–174 and Kowalzig in Murray and Wilson, 60 for the focus on dramatic rather than lyric choral performances. Revermann, 2006, 273 cites *Wealth* 290–321 as an unusual comic appropriation of dithyramb, although Henderson in Roisman, 240 points to parodies of lyric and epic as well as of tragedy.

28 Fisher 1998, 90, 93; Zimmerman, 1992, and in Sommerstein et al.; Wilson, 2000b, 75: "The choral reorganization of the Great Dionysia—often regarded as little more than a matter

In so doing, the special organization of dithyramb also set off comedy and tragedy as a pair, allowing, for example, for Plato's reference to "the best of either kind of poetry, comedy on the one hand and tragedy on the other" (*Theat.* 152e).

As I argue throughout, tragedy often concerns itself with necessity and comedy with freedom. The roots of this distinction may also lie in the genres' different origins. In line with the heterogeneity (and disruption) of its various sources,[29] the elements of comedy are disparate and often used for the sake of surprise.[30] In the *Frogs*, Aristophanes gives us an entry song for a chorus that turns out not to be the chorus of the play at all; in the *Acharnians*, he introduces an unexpected episode with Euripides that interrupts the progression from the entry song to the *agon*; in the *Clouds*, he transforms the *parabasis* into a plot device; and in the *Knights*, a second *parabasis*, less than 150 lines from the end of the play, heralds a complete turnaround in the action. Aristophanes also forefronts disruption in his plays' episodes, as in the motif of a series of visitors who

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of faintly antiquarian literary history—should be seen as an absolutely integral part of [the Cleisthenic] plan," and in Phillips and Pritchard. Although Pritchard, 2004 argues against a mingling of classes, he concludes that "the introduction of new tribally organized contests into the Great Dionysia would have been an effective way to broadcast to, and solemnize for, all Athenians the new tribal organization of the city" (224).

29 See Rusten in Rusten, 16–30 and 2006 for comedy's diverse origin, 54–55 in particular: "It is inherently improbable that a genre so rebellious and so diverse as comedy should have a single inventor or an orderly pattern of growth"; Rothwell, 23 on the disruptive implications of padded dancers; and Pütz, 142–150 on disruptive *komoi* reproduced in Aristophanes. Taplin, 1986, 172 observes: "On the whole the formal construction of tragedy is measured, well-articulated, and syntactic. The construction of comedy tends to be uneven, unpredictable, and paratactic," as Redfield, 1962, 111: "Tragedy is about the world of myth, with contemporary references; comedy is about the actual city, with references to myth. Tragedy depends upon heightened language and aims at solemnity of effect; comedy continually debases the language and makes its effects through triviality. But the greatest contrast is one of form. Attic tragedy is drama of the highest formal perfection; comedy is without apparent form." On the various elements of comedy, see Whittaker, 1935, 181–191; MacDowell, 1995, 18–19; Olson, 2007, 3–4; Henderson in Cornford, 1993, xxiii; Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 194ff. See Halliwell, 1997, xxx–xxxix for the elements of comedy as composing a structure both formal and fluid and Henderson, *Lysistrata*, xxix, for another deviation from the usual pattern.

30 As Metagenes' *Sacrifice-Lover* fr. 15: "In each episode I change the plot, so that / I can feast the audience with many and novel side dishes" (Rusten, 2011, 366). Similarly Platonius observes about Cratinus: "Even though he is on target in introducing and building up his plays, as he proceeds and breaks up the plot he fills them with inconsistencies" (Rusten, 2011, 81).

arrive randomly, interrupt the hero, and disappear.[31] If tragedy, like dithyramb, aims at a unified emotional response, comedy takes the opposite tack, emphasizing the arbitrary and unexpected—and as such also the humorous.[32] One can imagine a phallic procession aiming at a similar effect.

In contrast, tragedy, by beginning with a narrative unity, also began with a kind of necessity, both in the unified plot that was for Aristotle the most important element of the genre (*Poetics* 1450a22) and in the emotional intensity feared by Plato (*Rep*. 605b).[33] As Aristotle points out, necessity is implicit in narrative structure: "It is necessary with the characters as with the arrangement of incidents always to seek the necessary or the probable, so that such a person necessarily or probably would have said or done such a thing and this necessarily or probably would have followed that" (*Poetics* 1454a33, and see 1451a8).[34] Necessity is also embedded in many narratives involving Dionysus, the likely material of early dithyramb, particularly those that concern the futility of resisting the god's power, such as the stories of Pentheus, Lycurgus, Dionysus' entry into Athens, or the pirates of the Homeric *Hymn to Dionysus*.[35]

31 In *Acharnians*, two separate informers interrupt Dikaiopolis' market; in *Peace*, the arms dealers and Lamachus' son turn out not to want (or deserve) peace at all; in the *Birds*, the joke is extended even further. See Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 207–210 for the pattern and P.D. Arnott, 1962, 53–55 on the *Birds*. Silk, 1988, 19 cites Goffman on humor as characteristically frame-breaking rather than frame-making.

32 Bierl, 2009, 10: "Tragedy is based rather on a complex series of events, *mythos* in the Aristotelian sense condensed into plot, and accordingly thrusts the here and now more into the background, while comedy, with its preference for the episodic and paradigmatic as opposed to the syntagmic plane of action, is lacking in the area of *mythos* as purposeful action."

33 See Mastronarde, 2010, 24–25 with n. 68. For the importance of plot to the development of tragedy see Depew in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 138–142.

34 *Poetics* 1455b24, which sees tragedy as defined by a *desis* or "binding" and a *lusis* or "loosing," also shows Aristotle thinking in terms of necessity. Lowe in Redmond, 1988, 40–41 contrasts this necessary and consistent movement toward a tragic *peripeteia* with comedy, as Lowe, 2008, 24: "Where tragedy put limits on what it could do with the form and medium of theatre, comedy made a virtue of its freedom to transgress those limits." Silk, 1988, 6 links tragedy and "concentrated action, heightening (often associated with the concentration), and a cumulative logic" so that "comedy is accidentally dramatic, whereas tragedy is essentially dramatic," and see Zeitlin in Burian, 60 for the implications. Padel, 1992, 129ff. discusses "binding" as applying both to madness in Greek tragedy and to logical necessity. In contrast see Redfield, 1962, 112 on comedy: "The freedom of form reflects a complete psychological freedom; in the plays everything is allowed."

35 See Kowalzig and Wilson, 9 in Kowalzig. Seaford, *Bacchae*, 26, n. 6 adds other examples,

A sense that tragedy, through dithyramb, originated in myth would also connect to tragedy's self-conscious debt to epic, a debt itself laden with an involvement in necessity, both the necessity often translated as "fate" and the necessity linked to it, of death.[36] Judging from the extant plays, this implies another important contrast to comedy. In Aristophanes' plays death is never very serious. Despite Aristophanes' disclaimer, Cleon is just as much a target dead as he was alive (*Peace* 648–656, 751–761), while death has become such an abstraction that even gods (*Birds* 1221–1223) or dead people (*Frogs* 1013) can be threatened with it. Neither the *Frogs*, Aristophanes' *Gerytades*, or Eupolis' *Demes* saw death as interfering with a character's appearance onstage. It is just this distancing, in fact, that informs the *Frogs*, allows for the *Knights*' reversal of Medea's fatal "rejuvenation" of Pelias, and that, by way of contrast, brings the slight shiver, quickly passed over, in Lysistrata's reminder of the hoplites sent to war and the young women who will never find husbands (590, 595).[37]

Finally, as in Antiphanes' famous complaint (189.17–23; Athenaeus 6.222c), the stories of tragedy were already known by the audience, while the stories of comedy had to be invented. Given the myths of dithyramb and the improvisation of *komos*, this distinction may go back to the genres' origins.[38] And again the difference implies a relation to necessity on the one hand and to freedom

such as the daughters of Minyas and of Proitos, with a reference to McGinty, 1978, 77–78 for yet others, such as that of the Athenians. See Kowalzig, 26–32 in Csapo and Miller for these "resistance myths" as basic to dithyramb.

36 For Aeschylus' plays as "slices from Homer's feast" (Athenaeus 8 347e), *Frogs* 1040; Sommerstein, 1996b, 337–353; for Homer and tragedy, Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 23–28; Goldhill, 1986, 138 ff.; Seaford, 1994, 275–280 is unusual in disagreeing. For tragedy and myth more generally see Burian in Easterling, 178–208 and for comedy's response, Revermann in Bakola et al. See Mastronarde, 2010, 280: "Tragedy routinely questions the efficacy of all human intention and agency, setting it against a background of fate and divine will," and Bierl, 2009, 327–328: "The festivals of inversion involving dissolution and ridicule, which bring laughter together with the presentation of the lowly and ugly to the center, form the ritual occasion of Old Comedy. Tragedy is performed in the same context, but treats heroic myth, thereby making the supernatural and the tragic fall its theme." On the connection to death see Taplin, 2007, vii and 43–46, who points out how often tragedy was depicted on Italian funerary urns; Easterling in Easterling 1997, 53: "Death never ceased to be a defining feature of tragedy as understood in the Greek tradition." Similarly Gerber in Pucci, 1988; Bierl, 2009, 73; Hall, 2010, 70; and in Easterling, 97 for death as omnipresent in tragedy, and hardly acknowledged in comedy.

37 On the *Lysistrata*, Dillon, 1987a; Reckford, 1987, 405, 430 (as Whitman, 1964, 243) sees the "heaviness" of death in the weighing scene of the *Frogs* (1405–1406) as encapsulating the play's unusually tragic tone.

38 See Ley, 2007, 124–132, 203–204 on dithyramb and tragic chorus as composed; Rothwell,

on the other. Just as Virgil's *Aeneid* lends Roman history a note of inevitability simply by prophesying what has already happened, tragedy was imbued with a sense of necessity because it reenacted stories whose endings were already known. Comedy, in contrast, with its newly invented plots and focus on the contemporary, recalled the day-to-day world of the spectators, and so an outcome as unknown and unexpected as that of real life, or as the individual jeers of a phallic procession.

Although the relation of dithyramb and *komos* was very different from that of tragedy and comedy, we can see how the opposition of the later genres might have developed. The juxtaposition of two kinds of performance must have intensified the effect. As individual playwrights set off their own works against the background of the other genre, the result would be a tendency, over time, for the genres to mark out opposed and complementary spheres of interest.[39] The little evidence that remains suggests that this was the case. Our earliest depictions of tragedy include self-referential features later found only on comic vases, depictions of a chorus for example, and a masklike appearance to the actors.[40] If these reflect a feature of early tragedy, the traces of self-reference that persist in tragedies such as the *Ajax* or *Oedipus Tyrannos* may indicate that self-reference was not always the province of comedy.[41] Similarly, the *Fall of Miletus*, the *Phoenician Women*, and the *Persians*, all of which dramatized contemporary events, demonstrate that tragedy was not always confined to the world of the heroes. Nor does it seem likely, given the lengths to which Aristophanes is willing to go, that tragedy shifted from the contemporary to

2007, for a contrasting spontaneous *komos*. In contrast, *Poetics* 1449a14 sees an original improvisation in both dithyramb and phallic song.

39 Bierl, 2009, 18: "Because of the destabilization of its *Sitz im Leben* after 486 BCE, these ritual characteristics [of comedy] became fixed, preserved, or even partially created anew, evidently to differentiate it from tragedy." Taplin, 1986, 164: "To a considerable degree fifth-century tragedy and comedy help to define each other by their opposition and their reluctance to overlap." See also Gredley in Silk on the differentiation of the genres: "Aristophanes' preoccupation with the 'otherness' of tragedy strongly suggests that, in his view at least, these differences had become determinative" (209), and Silk, 1988, 16: "For Aristophanes, at least, contemporary tragedy is not merely different from his own drama, but does in various ways represent the alternative pole of a contrastive system from which he constantly takes his bearings." Similarly, Webster in Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 288 claims that "tragedy is also likely to have influenced Attic comedy from the beginning, as it did later, partly as a model, partly as an object for parody."

40 See J.R. Green, 1994, 17–19; Taplin, 2007, 28–29.

41 See Bierl, 2009, 26–31 and *passim* and Kowalzig, 221–251 in Csapo and Miller on self-reference as part of the ritual nature of tragedy.

the mythic for primarily prudential reasons. Rather, although the fine given Phrynichus for reminding Athens of Miletus' destruction (Herod. 6.21) may have played a role, it seems likely that as comedy came more explicitly to deal with the contemporary world, tragedy, to increase its effect, located itself more and more in the mythic world with which dithyramb had associated it.[42]

By the end of the fifth century, the idea that tragedy and comedy were not merely different forms of ritual performance, but opposed and complementary genres, appears to have become a commonplace. Plato, in fact, seems to have quite taken to the idea. The idea quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that the "serious" and the "laughable" define each other, appears again in his use of comedy and tragedy in the *Symposium*, as well as in his opposition of the genres in the *Philebus* (48a ff.).[43] A self-conscious opposition between comedy and tragedy also appears on South Italian vases that, in all probability, illustrate Athenian drama,[44] evidence that is particularly noteworthy since, as Green points out, a vase painter, who "made his pictures in terms of what his purchasers wanted and/or expected," would tend to reflect popular perception.[45] The Tarentine "Producer" vase, for example, depicts two comic impresarios, one examining a tragic Aegisthus and the other a padded, exaggerated, comic slave. Even more explicitly, the New York "Goose" vase depicts a scene from what may have been a well-known play, since we have two separate representations of it. On both vases the scene is enacted by exaggerated comic figures, one of whom stands (self-referentially) upon a stage. On the New York vase, however, the scene is embellished with a comic mask hanging above the actors, while a smaller, "real" figure labeled "*tragoidos*" views the scene from the side.[46]

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42 For Phrynichus' fine see Rosenbloom, 1993; on the shift Macleod, 1983, 27–28; Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, 237–248; and Russo, 1994, who sees comedy as becoming political when introduced into the Lenaia. Podlecki in Euben argues that early Greek tragedy presented "democratic" monarchs, suggesting a reference to the contemporary world that then faded until it reemerged with Euripides.

43 On the *Symposium* see Clay, 1975; Sheffield, 2001; Wardy, 2002. A similar but later pairing appears in Democritus and Heraclitus as the laughing and weeping philosophers, as Halliwell, 2008, 342–348.

44 See Taplin in Sommerstein et al., 527–544 and 1993, 30–47, 63–65 for the mutual definition and *passim* for the vases discussed in this chapter. For earlier considerations of the vases as reflecting fifth-century drama and tragic parody in particular, see Simon, 1982, 30–31; Dearden in Betts et al., 33–41, and for illustrations Bieber, 1961, 258–300.

45 J.R. Green, 1994, 26–27.

46 Similarly see the small "serious" figure on the British Museum comic vase, F 151, as Rusten, 2011, 441; Bieber, 1961, 135 fig. 492. Webster, 1970, 98 sees the figure as a tragic actor watching a comedy, while the Attic text refers the vase to Athenian comedy rather than local farce.

And, as we have seen, the view that tragedy and comedy are both opposed and complementary appears in the *Poetics*, where, although he is writing in the fourth century, Aristotle's continual references to Sophocles and Euripides show a concern with fifth-century drama.[47] It is therefore significant that he appears to see comedy and tragedy not only as opposed, but as actually the inverse of each other. Although the *Poetics* is deeply interested in the relation of tragedy and epic, Aristotle begins instead with tragedy and comedy, describing them as developing together and as opposites, in their origins, in their heroes (those better or those worse than ourselves), and in their appeal (to fear or to laughter). The contrast continues in what may remain of the second book of the *Poetics* on comedy, where the genres are set against each other in terms of their diction, tragedy operating with an elevated diction and comedy with a colloquial one (Janko xiv), in the idea of catharsis, for tragedy in pity and fear, for comedy in laughter (iv, ix), and as being on the one hand about the fearful and on the other about the absurd (iv).[48] Although Aristotle held a very different view of drama than Plato, and although, unlike Plato, he never saw a play produced by Sophocles, Euripides, or Aristophanes, he seems to have agreed that comedy and tragedy form an antithetical pair.

Of the many ways in which comedy and tragedy differ, the most important for this book is the tendency of tragedy to emphasize necessity and of comedy to focus on an escape from necessity, whether the necessity be divine, political, moral, or rational.[49] Given the importance of this theme a clarification is in

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Otherwise, on the "Goose" vases see Webster, 1948, 25; Taplin, 1992, fig. 10.2 and 11.3. Hall in Harvey and Wilkins, 412 sees the figure as an abstraction; Slater, 2002, 176 as evidence of tragic characters wandering into comedy, as Echo in *Women at the Thesmophoria*. For the "Producer" or "Choregos" vase see Taplin, 1992, fig. 9.1; J.R. Green, 1994, 46; Trendall and Webster, 1971, 38, 130.

47 As Silk, 2000, 77: "It was Aristotle who articulated the opposition" between tragedy and comedy (wrongly, in Silk's view). R. Rosen, 2007, 36–40 points out as well Aristotle's focus on invective, which must have a reference to old rather than new comedy. See Halliwell, 1986, 266–276 for what remains of Aristotle on comedy and Seidensticker, 1982, 249–271 on the separation of tragedy and comedy in ancient theory. Janko, 1984, 100–101, 244–250 sees Aristotle's focus as on old comedy while Halliwell, 273–274 disagrees.

48 Wiles in McDonald and Walton writes, "No one in antiquity, except Socrates in a flight of fancy at the end of Plato's *Symposium*, seems to have questioned the principle that tragedy and comedy are opposites," and points to the *Tractatus* (104). See also Golden, 1992; Janko, 1984; and, previously, Cooper, 1969.

49 Goldhill in Goldhill and Hall, 42: "[Electra's] final word is *luterion*. This is a charged word in Sophocles. Every character who thinks they have found *lusis*, release, is mistaken, and usually finds that what they thought was release is bringing them into deeper disaster";

order, even before I approach individual plays. In seeing tragedy as emphasizing necessity and comedy freedom, I do not mean that tragedy preaches submission to higher forces or that comedy merely indulges us in fantasy. Tragedy concerns necessity, but foremost among its concerns is the opening up of questions, both about necessity and about human life. In the same vein, while I will argue that Athenian tragedy does, in general, have "closure," in the Aristotelian sense of having a beginning, a middle, and an end, I do not mean this to imply that there is any single, univocal "solution" to a given play.[50] Nor does

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Winnington-Ingram in Mossman, 215: "It is by tragedy that we understand the conditions that are imposed upon human life and the limitations under which we live"; Gredley in Silk, 210, sees inevitability defining tragedy (in contrast to comedy) as in the recurrent motif of the tragic chorus's inability to act, and see Knox, 1964, 40–42 on the Sophoclean hero and Conacher, 1967, 3–23 for Euripides. For tragedy as depicting the constraints placed on us as moral agents see Williams, 1993 and Nussbaum, 1986. In small but telling cases Ormand, 1999, 35 discusses marriage in tragedy as leaving a woman no alternatives, and Schein, 1998, Sophocles' manipulation of verbal adjectives, turning subjective into objective necessity. Redfield in Winkler and Zeitlin, 326–327: "Tragedy brings home to the people the limiting conditions of their freedom" also sees comedy as the antitype.

On comedy, see Silk, 1988, 25–27 for a wide range of associations of comedy and freedom and 2000, 91: "Unlike other modes of art, and certainly unlike the genre of tragedy, comedy evokes the freedom we associate with living. Modern theorists insistently link comedy and freedom, and in a great variety of contexts; and that variety seems to be a corroboration of the point by itself." For comic freedom linked to catharsis, Sutton, 1994, and as characterizing comedy in an "imagist" tradition, Styan, 1975, 88–114.

In contrast Kerr, 1967, 144–165 (moving beyond Athens) sees the genres as mutually defining, with tragedy focusing on freedom and comedy on the necessity, for example, of the body, certainly one way in which comedy negotiates for itself the relation of freedom and necessity. Slater in Harrison, 83–101 notes that the prosatyric *Alcestis* follows the model of the festival as a whole, with a tragic, larger, half focusing on death and necessity and a shorter comic ending on freedom and release.

50 All in Silk, see Segal, 161: "Ritual closure does not necessarily mean complete resolution of the conflicts raised by the play," and Van Erp Taalman Kip for the modern tendency to deny closure even to the *Oresteia*, as Garvie: "The telos of closure is resisted in the continuing play of difference. The final meaning remains undetermined." Taplin, 196–199 sees comedy as tending toward closed, wrapped-up, reassuring endings and tragedy toward open, disturbing, and unsettled ones, while I would point instead to his 2007 account, that despite the suffering depicted in tragedy "we are glad of the sense they give us that human life is not all meaningless cacophony, that we have the ability to salvage pattern and harmony." The issue seems to be an equation of the disturbing with openness. *Oedipus Tyrannos* is certainly disturbing, but I would argue that it is the sense of necessity with which it closes that makes it so. Wright, 2005, 226–228, with bibliography, argues against the search for ambiguity in tragedy and points out that, without a tragic trilogy

the presence of necessity thereby render the play simplistic, as the example of the *Bacchae* makes clear. In short, the fact that tragedy is concerned with necessity in no way implies that the necessity is unproblematic.

Nor do I see Aristophanes' approach to freedom as mere wish fulfillment.[51] One misleading view of comedy, it seems to me, is that while tragedy questions the social order, comedy (merely) reaffirms it.[52] Another is that comedy provides a celebration and reaffirmation of nature and human vitality that defies the constraints and conventions of society.[53] Both views seem to me overly simplistic, largely because each ignores the equal validity of the other. Aristophanes, I will argue, both reaffirms the social order and exposes it as an arbitrary tissue-paper covering that vainly attempts to restrain the individual will.[54] That the two truths are contradictory is only one of the many reasons why it is comedy's role to explore them.

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complete with satyr play, it is difficult to judge closure. Or, as Griffith, 1995, 75, n. 52: "The show isn't over until the satyrs have sung."

51 In contrast see Redfield, 1962, 112–113.

52 McGlew, 2002, 203: "Comic characters rehearse, celebrate, and strengthen a fundamental characteristic feature of the democratic: the audience's elaborate and sometimes quite fragile sense of itself as a collective"; C. Segal, 1981, 52: "The comic hero too may exceed the limits of divine and social order; his motivation and ultimate fate, however, are a return to or a restoration of that order, not the exploration of infinities beyond it." Similarly Rothwell, 2007, 185 concludes: "The animals of these [comic] choruses were presented as creatures that, like Dionysus, abolished the difference that separates men from animals, yet unlike Dionysus they do not shatter the social order in so doing; instead they confirm it." For a more "open" view of this theme see Reckford, 1987, 283–364 on Aristophanes' celebration of *communitas*, and, in a more general form, Cook, 1949, 49 and Frye, 1957, 37, 43, 163–185.

53 As Whitman, 1964, 61 on Dikaiopolis: "Here is the self, trapped and mocked by the institutions of an alienated society," or Strauss, 1966, 312–313 on comedy, as the antitype to tragedy, portraying a complete freedom from *nomos*. In these terms Carey, 1993, as Forrest, 1963, argues that the *Acharnians* is "an escapist fantasy." On comedy as the assertion of the individual against the restraints of society, see, for example, Dover, 1972, 31–41; E. Segal, 2001; Sutton, 1994, 51–60; Reckford, 1987, 53–120; and Reckford, 1977, on the celebration of psychological escape. Platter, 2006, 41 sees Aristophanes' conservative orientation "ironized" by antinomian elements. Sommerstein, 2009, 204–222 points out the inherent "tension in comedy between an individualistic and a communal ethos" (204), although he sees this as resolved in an idealized monarchy (212).

54 Correspondingly, as Halliwell, 2008, 19–38 explores, laughter can express both hostility and community, as also 136: "Laughter can be perceived as marking inclusion or exclusion from a social group."

2 Masks, Costumes, Choruses, Language, and Props

As significant as the conceptual differences between tragedy and comedy seem to have been, the far more obvious difference between them was visual, as seen in the contrast between the stately masks and robes of tragedy and the grotesque and flamboyant appearance of the comic actors and chorus. This difference also seems linked to their origins. Dithyramb, as far as we know, seems not to have involved either masks or particular costuming, while both, and in their most exaggerated forms, were characteristic of *komos*, where outrageousness, and the counterpoint of that outrageousness to ordinary life, was exactly the point.[55] A second significant difference is that comedy, in contrast to tragedy, tends to draw attention to the chorus. This appears in the flamboyant costumes of the comic chorus, in the emphasis placed upon its entry, in its larger size (twenty-four members as opposed to the twelve or fifteen of tragedy), and even in the names of the plays, which in comedy are often taken from the chorus (as *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Birds*, etc.) and in tragedy from a central character, such as Agamemnon, Oedipus, or Medea.[56] And yet, surprisingly, the comic chorus is also distinguished from the tragic by its tendency, in the second half of the play, to fade into the background. Finally, comedy distinguishes itself from tragedy in its interest in the sheer physicality of the objects it brings onto the stage. As we will see in looking at these differences, the disparate origins of comedy created multiple ways for it to position itself against tragedy, and with significant results.

2.1 *Masks*

The key difference, visually, between a comedy and a tragedy in Athens was simple: ugliness.[57] This was particularly true of the actors' masks, augmented,

55 Lowe, 2008, 26–27 on the extravagance of comedy's production values in contrast to tragedy; Csapo in Fontaine and Scafuro, 56–64 on depictions of mask and costume. For dithyramb's lack of masks see Rothwell, 2007, 62; Scullion, 2002, 115–116; Pickard-Cambridge, 1962, 34; Froning, 1971, 24–25 for dithyramb not taking on particular characterizations; J.R. Green in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 102 for the adoption of masks as the critical difference between dithyramb and tragedy. For the early association of comedy with masks Halliwell, 2008, 171–172, 177–181, 228–229; Rusten, 2011, 19, 47; *On Comedy* on wine lees as the original masks (Rusten, 2011, 423); Demosthenes' *On the Crown* 18.11.122, *On the False Embassy* 19.287 for masks in ritual abuse (Rusten, 2011, 95); *Poetics* 1449a37.

56 On the validity of titles see Sommerstein, "The titles of Greek dramas," in Sommerstein, 2010.

57 On comic ugliness overall see Revermann, 2006, 145–159; D. Walsh, 2009, 245 ff.; Himmel-

in the case of comedy, by padded bellies and rumps and, for most male characters, by the stage phallus. The masks of Athenian comedy and tragedy illustrated not a happy or sad conclusion to the play, but the grotesque and physical on the one side and elevation and dignity on the other. Aristotle thus points to the "ludicrous" (*geloion*) form of the comic mask as evidence of comedy's orientation toward "the base" (*aischron*, *Poetics* 1449a35) in contrast to tragedy's toward the noble or *kalon* (1450b35, 1452a10, 1454b10, etc.). The contrast on South Italian vases is similar, between tragic figures with the regular features of nobility and comic characters with distorted features and padded bellies and buttocks. And the use of ugliness on the vases shares another characteristic with its use in comedy, in pointing to a metatheatrical engagement with the "serious" world around it, which in the case of comedy includes both the world of ordinary day-to-day Athens and the world of tragedy.

That the visual hallmarks of comedy and tragedy are the grotesque and the noble is commonly agreed; what this opposition signifies has been largely debated. Winkler saw an opposition between comedy's anti-civic and tragedy's civic values, but it seems unlikely that comic ugliness was intended as anti-civic, particularly given the usual downfall of the tragic hero and the success of his comic counterpart.[58] Moreover, as Foley points out, one would not expect the city to expend much effort in producing comedies if their main purpose was to subvert the city's norms.[59] Foley and Revermann see a Bakhtinian inversion in comedy that allows it to appropriate, through ugliness, both the heroes of tragedy and characters from the contemporary world,[60] while Bierl, focusing on the origin of masks in ritual, sees both genres as using masks to allow for a slippage, particularly in the chorus, between the plot and the here and now of the performance.[61] A fourth approach tells against both of these views by

man, 1994, 121–122; Sutton, 180–202 and Foley, 275–311, both in Cohen, 2000; Winkler, 1990. As expressed in the masks see Taplin in Silk, 189–190.

58 As Revermann, 2006, 148.

59 Foley, 2000, 276.

60 Winkler, 1990; Foley in Cohen, 2000; Revermann, 2006, 149 on Foley: "This model is ultimately inspired by a Bakhtinian analysis, which connects grotesque corporeality with carnivalesque licence. Its value, I submit, resides in the fact that it accounts for comic ugliness as a major strategy of *appropriation* and *authentication*: ugliness is a way for comedy to claim any character as its own" [italics original]. For feminine costume in particular as an appropriation see Zeitlin, 1966, 385. Sutton's view (in Cohen, 180–202) that the ugly / beautiful distinction in vase painting is largely class-based is countered by D. Walsh, 2009, 245–247 who cites "ugly" gods and heroes and, for comedy, by Revermann, 2006, 152.

61 Bierl, 2009, 7–11, 72–75 and *passim* and Calame, 1989, whom Bierl cites as a source.

arguing that in comedy, as in tragedy, once a male actor has donned the mask of a woman he is presumed to be a woman; the mask, for the duration of the play, indicates the character's "real" identity.[62] The point, although at first it seems quite limited, calls into question both Bierl's idea of slippage and Foley's sense that uglification in comedy is intended to allow citizens a license not usually theirs.

Most generally, it seems unlikely that the ugliness of the comic mask was meant as, in Foley's term, a form of disguise.[63] Although both the tragic and the comic mask add an element of otherness to the drama, the otherness seems best understood, as Revermann argues, as setting the actor off from the audience, rather than as pointing to a distinction between the actor and the character he plays.[64] Within the play the actor *is* the character, even when, as frequently happens in comedy, the character is aware that he is on stage. In other words, the mask in Athenian drama never comes off.[65] In tragedy, this

62 Thumiger, 2007, 53–55. This has been explored particularly in regard to the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, where Taaffe's claim, 1993, 100: "the joke is that male actors as women always remain male actors as women; they cannot be viewed seamlessly as women per se at all" is countered in the same volume by Gamel, 324, who refers it to a "basic misunderstanding about the nature of illusion in Aristophanes" and Henderson, 504–505: "In comedy, as in tragedy, female characters are always supposed to be women" in contrast to Stehle's claim, 401, that Aristophanes' "project is inherently self-defeating in that his women, too, are played by men." The position is common, as Robson in Cleland et al., 71 or Bierl, 2009, 89 describing *Women at the Thesmophoria*: "the identity of the male citizen behind the female dramatic role of the chorus always remains visible" and see 187. One reason may be seen in McCart, 259–260 in McDonald and Walton, who explicitly derives his perception of the mask from modern reperformance, where the usual assumption that female roles will be played by female actors strongly influences the audience's view.

63 Foley in Cohen, 2000, 306: "As the comic body disguises itself as tragic or heroic or denies its grotesque appearance through a claim to a citizen status, the viewer comes to envision the comic costume itself as a kind of disguise" and see 310.

64 Revermann, 2006, 162.

65 See Stone, 1981, 404, for the permanence of most masks; Wiles in Revermann and Wilson, particularly 384: "The Greek 'mask' is semantically also the 'face'; it is not a concealment of the face"; Hall, 2010, 18 and Revermann, 2006, 162 for a contrast to depictions such as the "Antigone" vase (D. Walsh, 2009, 221–222). Of course this does not mean that references to masks cannot be used metatheatrically, as Cratinus fr. 218—"Hand over the tragic masks to me"—or in Aeschylus' satyr play, *Festival-goers*, as Slater, 2002, 17; J.R. Green, 1994, 45–46. This "permanence" of the mask may also explain the description of the actors appearing "naked" without their masks at the proagon (Scolion to Aeschines, *Against Ktesiphon* 67).

identification of mask and character allows for such shocking effects as Oedipus' emergence in *Oedipus Tyrannos* with bloodied eyeholes, or the carrying onstage of the mask of the decapitated Pentheus in the *Bacchae*.[66] The identification also accounts for the extraordinary way in which actors, depicted on vases as actors, "become" the characters as soon as they have donned their masks.[67] The identification is equally important in comedy.[68] In the *parabasis*, for example, when the chorus gives us Aristophanes' opinions, the shift engages their identity as an Aristophanic chorus, not as the particular real Athenians who happen to be performing.[69] Similarly, Aristophanes uses masks that caricature real people not to demonstrate the actors' ability to imitate Cleon or Euripides, but to display his own paradoxical power to put people actually in the audience also into his play.[70] As we will see, comedy has a huge interest in disguise, but the interest focuses not on the mask, nor on the actual actor, but rather on the distinction between the padded "body" of the character portrayed and the character's removable outer costume.

The identification of mask and character implies that the ugliness of comedy is not a disguise, and so cannot be taken as appropriating tragic or contemporary characters. But if the aim of comedy is not appropriation but dialogue, uglification can then be seen not as assimilating the figures, either of the tragic stage or of the audience, but rather as calling attention to itself as a variation on them. The ugliness of the comic mask sets itself against the tragic and contem-

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66 On the *Bacchae*, and the links between Dionysus' mask and both the thyrsus and the ritual masks depicted on Greek vases, see Chaston, 2010, 179–238. Taplin, 1978, 100 describes Pentheus' mask as an "ambivalent object which sums up a central ambivalence in the play."

67 As on the Pronomos vase, Brommer, 1959, 9; Webster, 1967a, 5–6; Hedreen, 1992, 107–108, 117, pl. 32; Taplin and Wyles, 2010. On the Attic *pelike*, MFA 98.883, where two tragic actors dress as women, the one with his mask on appears as an actual woman; see Csapo and Slater, Plate 7B; Winkler and Zeitlin, pl. 3; Gould in Easterling and Knox, 24–25. J.R. Green in McDonald and Walton, 172–173; Green 1994, 24–25 on a red figure vase of an actor performing as a maenad (as the *aulos* player indicates) shown with a bare breast.

68 One possible exception to the rule, the feast scene in *Peace* where the chorus may unmask to eat (1305–1315; Sommerstein, *Peace*, 195 and 1984b), would reinforce its importance, emphasizing that Trugaios' acquisition of peace, unlike Dikaiopolis', is for everyone. See Slater, 2002, 130–131; Revermann, 2006, 172–177 and Chapter Six, section two.

69 As Slater, 2002, 75–77 on *Knights*.

70 As in the joke at *Knights* 230–233 that, although the mask-makers were too afraid to do a portrait-mask of Paphlagon/Cleon, he will be recognized all the same. See Dover, 164, in Newiger and Stone, 1981, 31–38 for a discussion of portrait masks as an extension of "personal humor" (38).

porary worlds in order to display its difference. Like the caricatures on vases, the ugly "Odysseus" asks to be compared to the hero of epic and tragedy, the ugly "Cleon" to be compared to Cleon in the audience. Unlike tragedy, comedy demands to be seen not alone, but in dialogue with the world it has uglified.

Tragedy, in contrast, does not demand the comparison. As has often been noted, the tragic mask conforms to an ideal that also appears throughout Greek culture, most explicitly on statues and vases.[71] Zeitlin points out, moreover, that the "ideal" manifested in the visual arts grew up coextensively with Greek drama, while Hall points to more than a thousand instances where tragedy alludes to art objects such as statues, weaving, and paintings.[72] The "ideal" as it appears in the tragic mask thus fits seamlessly into a far more extensive world-view. As a continuous element within its idealized world, the tragic mask does not call attention to itself, just as dithyramb, which was performed without masks, did not. The grotesque exaggeration of the comic mask is a very different case, aimed not at expressing an ideal, but at inverting it, not at fitting within a whole, but at calling attention to its distortion of both the ideal and the spectator's ordinary world.[73]

That this is also how the genres were perceived becomes evident in looking at vases, where tragedy is regularly presented as "real" and comedy as metatheatrical. Greek vases make no distinction between a direct presentation of a tragic myth and the myth as presented in drama. There is no way to distinguish iconographically between a depiction of a tragic performance, a direct depiction of a myth, and a scene taken from life. Only the details of the scene indicate when a vase is referring to tragedy, as, for example, the Lucanian vase that

71 See Hall, 2010, 55; Zeitlin, 138–196 in Goldhill and Osborne, 1994 and Golder, 1992, on the interplay between tragedy and the visual arts. Similarly, Chaston, 2010, 11, 33–36 points to the function of the tragic mask as universalizing.

72 Hall, 2010, 88.

73 D. Walsh, 2009. 26: "Comedy in general, however, irrespective of the level of operation, often presupposes comparison. Parody, mockery, and straightforward 'mickey-taking' are funny because of their deviation from what is perceived to be normal or generally acceptable" and see 257–258 for the deeper implications of the contrast of the *aischros* and *kalos*. See Winkler, 1990; D. Walsh, 2009, 245–247; and Sutton in Cohen, 181–182 on the contrast of the ideal and the grotesque, and for the contrast in vase painting see, in Csapo and Miller, 2007, Isler-Kerényi, 84–85 and Green, 101–102. Although Foley in Cohen, 278–284 argues for a range of costumes rather than a simple opposition between comic and tragic, an overall grouping of "ideal" forms against grotesque ones still seems prevalent, both in comedy and in satyr drama, where the contrast between the "serious" figures of myth and the satyrs and Papposilenus was the point.

shows Medea's escape on the chariot of the Sun.[74] When comedy is depicted on vases, however, the theatricality is clear: the stage is present or an *aulos*-player performs, as he would in the theater, and the characters are depicted as actors, padded, phallic, and with the gaping mouths that recall the masks of their profession.[75] The difference confirms both that comedy was seen as metatheatrical and that the comic mask and costume, in contrast to the tragic, was seen in this way as well.

These different perceptions also appear on the many South Italian vases that parody the stories of tragedy. These vases, which depict, for example, a frightened Ajax cowering before a grotesque Cassandra, or Priam, perched comfortably on his altar, remonstrating with a potbellied Neoptolemus, or a harridan-like Arete berating a chastened Odysseus, are funny because of their distortion of the "right" version of the story.[76] The exceptions, such as the beautiful Alcmene flanked by a grotesque Zeus and Hermes, or Helen, emerging from an egg split by a padded comic actor, emphasize the contrast.[77] And occasionally the vases move to a metatheatrical level that exceeds even comedy, as on the vase that depicts a padded Antigone, played by a clearly male actor, proving her innocence before Creon by removing "her" mask.[78]

In this way the comic mask, through its ugliness, demands a comparison with the ideal it distorts, a comparison that Aristophanes emphasizes by bringing onstage beautiful nude female abstractions that present "Peace Treaties" (*Knights* 1388), "Festival-going" and "Harvest" (*Peace* 523), "Reconciliation"

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74 See Taplin, 2007, 117–121, 22–26, and *passim* with additional bibliography. As has often been pointed out, vase-painters produced recreations rather than illustrations of plays, as J.R. Green, 1994, 26.

75 See J.R. Green, 1994, 23–29; Taplin, 1992, 20–29 and 2007, 26–28; Simon, 1982, 8–12, for the contrast in iconography. For other metatheatrical elements on comic vases see Taplin, 1992, 67–68, and for "para-iconography," the mocking of "serious" depictions of tragedy, 79–88.

76 For Ajax, see Bieber, 1961, fig. 494, p. 136, D. Walsh, 2009, frontispiece and 83; Taplin, 1992, 80–82; Webster, 1948, 23; for Priam, Bieber fig. 490; for Odysseus and Arete, Bieber fig. 495 p. 136; similarly see D. Walsh, 2009, 204–212 for numerous caricatures of Oedipus and the Sphinx. Trendall and Webster, 1971, 117–144; Taplin, 1992, 63–65 and Csapo and Slater, 1994, 53–72 give surveys of the most important evidence.

77 Bieber, 1961, figs. 501, 492, 484; D. Walsh, 2009, 117–118, 136, 249–250 and see the cover of Revermann, 2014. The Helen vase may depict Cratinus' *Nemesis*, as Rusten, 2011, 189–191. A similar situation pertains, as my nephew Nathaniel points out to me, in Asterix comics.

78 See D. Walsh, 2009, 221–222; Trendall and Webster, 1971, 141–142; Bieber, 1961, fig, 490, p. 134, and with contrasting serious depictions Taplin, 1992, 21–22.

(*Lys*. 1114), etc.[79] Tragedy leaves it to the viewer to compare the tragic and the contemporary worlds. Comedy brings the comparison, both to tragedy and to the ordinary world, into the drama itself; anyone, from Lamachus to Cleitophon to Odysseus to Zeus himself can be uglified. The effect recalls the anecdote about Socrates, who is said to have stood up during the performance of *Clouds* so that strangers could appreciate the comic "Socrates" mask.[80] To the extent that it is an inverted world, comedy demands to be seen against its double, the world right side up. To the extent that it is a caricature, it requires the audience to take into account the original as well. And in giving its audience multiple perspectives on both the ordinary world and on tragedy, comedy sets itself against, and in dialogue with, the "ideal," singular, and particular world of tragedy, in a way we will revisit in section four of Chapter Five.[81]

That comedy's main interest lay not in appropriation but in multiplying perspectives appears also in the other, often very different masks of comedy, those of the chorus. Onstage the comic actors' ugliness would be vividly set off by the costumes of the chorus, costumes which, if they were not more gorgeous than those of tragedy, could certainly be more gaudy.[82] The choruses of tragedy, after Aeschylus' experiments with Furies and Oceanids (if these were Aeschylus'), are generally neither flamboyant nor nonhuman. Comedy, in contrast, introduced choruses that do not take over ordinary points of view, but that introduce bizarrely new ones. Aristophanes' choruses of wasps, knights (complete with horses), clouds, birds, and frogs were matched on the comic stage by cities, flies, plays, beasts, goats, demes, ants, Amazons, vultures, fish, and bees. As Rothwell

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79 As Revermann, 2006, 157–159. Foley in Cohen, 296, compares the Heracles and Auge vase (D. Walsh, 2009, 85, and see 151–152, 216) and sees the occasional youthful athletic male (as Pheidippides) of Old Comedy as playing a similar role.

80 Aelian, *Varia Historia* 11.13; Rusten, 2011, 425; Nussbaum, 1980, 71.

81 Foley in Cohen, 304–305 sees this, but views the "norm" that is inverted as the actor's actual body, now in disguise, rather than the tragic and civic ideal: "In short, comic costume in a sense is in itself visually self-referential. It reminds us, both in the plays and on the vases, that we are seeing *costumes* in a performative context, and that *another non-grotesque body* exists beneath the padding, mask, and long phallus of the actor" [italics original]. In contrast see Wiles in Revermann and Wilson, 380: "It is clear of course that we are systematically shown body-stockings and masks as signs of performative context, but it does not follow that we are invited to imagine the physique of the actor beneath."

82 Green in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 104: "The depictions suggest that two among other elements were important: the inventiveness put into the character of the choros and the fantasy (including the colour and sometimes internal variation) of their costume." Revermann, 2006, 156–159 discusses the question of whether comic ugliness extended to the chorus.

points out, the "otherness" that persists in and shapes the comic chorus appears in all the various sources that may have contributed to comedy, the Corinthian padded dancers, the depictions of choruses in Scythian, Lydian, and Thracian gear, and the early Attic animal choruses.[83]

This tendency also casts a new light on the inversion implied by comic ugliness. That Old Comedy deliberately inverted cultural values is clear, not only in the ugliness of its masks, but also in its tendency to side with the bodily over the civic, the lower class over the elite, and the old over the young (who also, as in the *Assemblywomen*, tend to be uglier the older they are).[84] But inverting civic values is not the same thing as replacing them, any more than presenting birds, frogs, or flies onstage implies a desire to champion the animal over the human. Rather, in both cases, what comedy has done is to exaggerate contrasts in order to create multiple perspectives from which to view the world of the *polis*. Both visually and conceptually, the possibility of choruses of birds, clouds, or frogs served as an incentive in comedy not to assimilate the world of the familiar, but to expand it almost beyond recognition, once more reflecting back on both the "ordinary" and on the tragic.

2.2 *Costume*

Although the heading of the previous section referred only to masks, the uglification of an ancient Athenian comic actor went much further. In tragedy the only element of the actor's costume taken to represent the character's "self" was the mask.[85] In comedy a character's "permanent" costume (the "*somation*"), as opposed to their outer clothing, extended to grotesque padding on the belly and rump and (for most male characters) an extensive stage phallus.[86]

83 Rothwell, 2007, 33–34; see Green in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 104 for the prevalence of foreigners as chorus.

84 Revermann, 2006, 150.

85 Note, for example, the significance of the "silent mask" in tragedy, as observed by Gregory McCart, 253–255 in McDonald and Walton.

86 Wiles in Revermann and Wilson, 381: "the mask should be uncoupled from taxonomies derived from Pollux, and associated with the other elements of the comic body: the belly, the buttocks, and the phallus." For an excellent visual representation, D. Walsh, 2009, 153 (with 155) where an "ideal" nude Dionysus is contrasted to the "stage-nakedness" of a comic actor. See Rusten, 2006, 30 n. 10 for a late 5th century Attic *chous* (St. Petersburg, Hermitage State Museum, 1869.47 = HGRT 45 fig. 184, PHV2 no. 6) showing "two young men dressing for a performance, each wearing the body-stocking called *somation* (Platon fr. 287), with padded stomach and buttocks, and the phallus, one rolled-up, one hanging." For the complex question of the adoption of the female "body" in comedy by male actors see Zeitlin, 1966, 375–416.

For the chorus, the "permanent" costume would include also the elements of costume that portrayed them, for example, as wasps, flies, or birds. Unlike the clothing that went over this, which in Aristophanes is regularly changed, this "permanent" costume could not be removed on stage—the wasps may remove their cloaks (403–414, and see *Birds* 670–674), but not their stings; the in-law of *Women at the Thesmophoria* can change his clothing, but not his phallus. The difference extends to radically different ways of viewing costume, and with these, to radically different ways of viewing a character's identity. Tragedy almost never points to the distinction between a character's costume and his or her body. In comedy there is all the difference in the world between the character's stage "body" and the clothing that (more or less) covers it.

In stark contrast to his "permanent" mask, padding, and phallus, the (predominantly male) comic character's outer costume was eminently removable, as we will see in Chapter Three in looking at the theme of disguise in the *Acharnians*. In tragedy, in contrast, costume almost never changes. In Aristophanes there are few plays in which the hero does not, at some point or other, have a significant costume change, often even on stage. Among these the most programmatic is a shift into the outfit of celebration that signifies the hero's success, such as the bridal clothes Trugaios and Peisetairos don at the end of *Peace* and *Birds*, the transformation of Demos at the end of *Knights*, Dionysus' return to his rightful robes after the *parabasis* of *Frogs*, or the clothing that, presumably, signifies the hero's newfound prosperity in *Wealth*.[87] Aristophanes also plays with this convention of course, as in *Wasps*, where Bdelycleon tries, and fails, to transform his father's costume in accordance with his new dignity; in *Birds*, where baskets of wings are required to outfit all the new occupants of Cloudcuckooton; or in *Clouds*, where, despite Strepsiades' premature celebration, Pheidippides' new, sallow appearance after his time in the Thinkery reverses the theme of a change to prosperity (1170–1175, 1201–1213).

Unlike their tragic counterparts, comic characters, as Silk has pointed out, tend to be inherently fluid, a difference that appears also in their costumes.[88] Tragic costume points to a settled condition, as in the *Seven Against Thebes*, where the shields that the heroes carry give us direct access to their character. Even a scrap of cloth, such as Electra's weaving in the *Libation Bearers* (231–232), can identify character (as also *Iphigenia among the Taurians* 814–817, and see 797–799). In fact, it may be exactly this presupposition in tragedy

87 See Stone, 1981, 399–407, 403–404 for Peisetairos and 406–408 for Demos, with Revermann, 2006, 120–121.

88 Silk, 150–173 in Pelling, 1990 and see Chapter Four.

that Aristophanes mocks when he depicts Euripides in the *Acharnians* and Agathon in the *Women at the Thesmophoria* as unable to compose unless they are dressed like the character they create.[89] The connection even holds in the unusual cases where a tragic character does change costume, since the change generally reflects a change in the character's permanent condition. The chorus's donning of red robes in the *Eumenides*, the color worn by *metics*, or resident aliens, in the Panathenaic procession, indicates their new condition as adoptive citizens of Athens,[90] while in the *Persians* the Queen's removal of her adornments reflects the altered condition of Persia itself. This is also the case in the few instances where tragic characters lack their usual noble robes. In the most remarkable instance, in the *Persians*, Xerxes' entry in rags signifies his transformation from supreme ruler to defeated fugitive.[91] Similarly, the wretched costume of Philoctetes in *Philoctetes* and (presumably) of Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus* reflect an essential aspect of their condition, while the robes sent by Medea and Deianara do not merely signify, but actually cause a downfall. And, in a slightly more cynical take, Euripides' Electra, who is determined not to move out of her role as mourner, refuses to change clothes, despite the chorus's generous offer of a new dress (*Electra* 190–193).

But these cases, where tragedy interests itself in costume, are already exceptions. More commonly tragic characters neither alter their costumes nor refer to them. Like their masks, their robes are designed to fit seamlessly into their milieu.[92] This holds true even when tragic characters are in disguise: Orestes

89 See Robson in Cleland et al. and in McHardy et al., 180: "the clothing donned by the poet is to be viewed as having effected an internal change." On the shields see Chaston, 2010, 67–130. Saïd in Harrison, 2002, 64–65 points out that the idea of using skin color rather than simply costume to distinguish a barbarian does not occur until Euripides. Euripides ridicules the connection when Electra mocks the idea that Orestes would still have the garments she wove for him as a child (*Electra* 538–544).

90 Gibert, 1995, 119–120. R. Drew Griffith, 1988, 554, although overall an excellent study, bases his interpretation on the idea that the Furies also remove their earlier robes, which is not indicated in the text.

91 For clothing, and the Queen's concern with it in *Persians* see Taplin, 1977, 121–122; Conacher, 1996, 28 with n. 50 for further references; Anderson, 1972, 173–174; Avery, 1964, 179–178; Thallman, 1980; Saïd, 1988, on the contrast between Xerxes' and Darius' appearance. Hall, *Persians*, 7 dramatically misses the point.

92 See Taplin, 2007, 38 and 1978, 13–14, 77–78 for a basic uniformity in tragic costumes and Ley in McDonald and Walton, 278: "Costume in tragedy was probably an elaborate, decorated version of everyday clothing, but it is rarely used to provide a specific focus for the action"; Llewellyn-Jones in Roisman 1.252–254. Julius Pollux, *Onomastikon* 4.118 describes women as wearing royal robes of purple unless dressed in mourning.

in the *Libation Bearers*, and in both Sophocles' and Euripides' *Electra*, and the merchant in *Philoctetes* all appear to practice their deception by speech rather than by a manipulation of costume; at any rate, the text makes no reference to costume, and no costume change would be needed to practice the deception. Only the Furies and Atossa change costume in the extant plays of Aeschylus; there are no costume changes in Sophocles, and even in Euripides, who has, as I will suggest, a strong interest in adopting comic motifs, costume changes occurs only in the *Heracles*, *Helen*, and *Bacchae*, and always off stage.[93]

The situation in comedy is very different indeed. In addition to the costume changes we have already noted, in the *Acharnians* the Persian costume of the ambassadors (115–122), Dikaiopolis' Telephus costume, and the Megarian daughters' "piggy" outfits are put on or taken off onstage; in the *Birds*, after their extensive comments on the costumes of Tereus and the chorus, Peisetairos and Euelpides don wings; in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, the in-law is elaborately costumed and then uncostumed onstage, leading into Euripides' multiple costume changes; in *Frogs*, Dionysus and Xanthias elaborately trade the Heracles outfit back and forth; and in *Assemblywomen*, the initial focus is entirely on women putting on men's costumes and men putting on women's.[94] The motif is both omnipresent and pointed, and it is worth remarking that it is nearly universal when Aristophanes is dealing with tragedy.

As I hope the remainder of this book will show, comedy tends to take a rather cynical view of distinctions determined by culture. Most obviously in its persistent interest in the ability of men to appear as women, as in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, and of women to appear as men, as in the *Assemblywomen*,

93 *Helen* 1087–1089, 1186–1189, *Bacchae* 827ff., and *Heracles* 327–331, 442–444 where the children are redressed in funeral robes. In the *Persians* the Queen's description of herself as now "without chariot or finery" (607–608) indicates a removal of outer adornments rather than a change of costume—see Sider, 1983, 189. Taplin, 1977, 78, 98–100 sees her second entrance as in basic black, related to an essential change in the Queen's view of wealth. Sourvinou-Inwood in Clauss and Johnston, 290–294 suggests that Medea wears a different costume in the final scene, but without textual evidence, as Mastronarde, *Medea*, 41–42; Mossman, *Medea*, 50–51. See Foley, 1985, 224–234 for Pentheus' change giving control to Dionysus, and Buxton in Goldhill and Hall, 249: "the highlighting of the ambivalent appearance of Dionysus cannot be matched elsewhere in the extant tragedies—although *in comedy* we need look no further than *Frogs* for an equivalent" [italics original] and 243–247 for a summary of views of the dressing scene. For a further discussion of disguise in comedy and tragedy see Chapter Three.

94 See Lada-Richards, 1991, 159–161 on the *Frogs* and Bakola, 2010, 252–271, for a similar interest in costume and disguise in Cratinus.

comedy calls into question the reality of distinctions based largely on dress.[95] Similarly, transformations like that of the Persian attendants who turn out, under their costumes, to be Athenians, or, most radically, the ability of ordinary Athenians to also be wasps or birds, suggest that the distinctions between Greek and non-Greek and even between animal and human may be largely a question of outer form. In contrast, as we will see in Chapter Four, the heroes of tragedy, like Aristotle's serious (*spoudaios*) man, have an identity not dependent on externals (*Ethics* 1101a15, 1098a). This contrast may account for the remarkable fact that of Aristophanes' eleven extant plays, fully three, and three that span the course of his career—the *Acharnians* in 425, the *Women at the Thesmophoria* in 411, and the *Frogs* in 405—criticize Euripides for his play with costume.[96] An exchange in the *Frogs* between the proper, traditional tragedian Aeschylus and the upstart innovator points out the implications:

> Aeschylus: And elsewise is it proper that demigods use greater sayings,
> as e'en their garments are statelier far (*semnoteroi*) than ours.
> So I showed them, rightly, but you mutilated them.
> Euripides: Doing what?
> Aeschylus: First, you showed to men kings done up in rags to be pitiable.
> Euripides: So what harm did I do, doing that?
> Aeschylus: Not one of the wealthy equip triremes any longer because of it,
> but wrapped up in rags he laments and says he is poor.
> Dionysus: Yes, and by Demeter, he has a nice wooly vest underneath,
> and when he has fooled everyone, he pops up at the store to buy fish.
> 1060–1068

95 See, for example, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, where the singeing of the in-law's nether regions, then (necessarily, considering his comic phallus) covered by his dress, plays on tragedy's "total" disguise, and where the instability of dress is "stabilized" only by the hunt for his (purely conventional) phallus (643–650). For gender identity as constructed see Foley in Revermann, 2014; Bassi, 1998, 232–233; Duncan, 2000/2001, 35 answering Bobrick's claim in Dobrov, 1997 that the confusion of roles exists only to reinforce male dominance. For the confusion as not subversive, Saïd, 1987; Taaffe, 1993, *passim* for the feminine connected to ambivalence and dramatic illusion.

96 Milanezi, 75–86 in Llewellyn-Jones and Harlow sees the theme as implying a comparison of tragedy and comedy, particularly in regard to civic responsibility. Interestingly, as Gould in Easterling and Knox, 27, points out, vases show Euripides' heroes not in rags, but in the standard robes of tragedy, either because this is how they appeared on stage, or (as I would suggest) because this is how they were expected to appear, despite Euripides' innovations.

The proper tragedian, according to Aristophanes' Aeschylus, dresses heroes in a way appropriate to themselves, and in so doing teaches the citizens that their appearance should match their reality.[97] Like Plato's true citizen (*Rep.* 397e), the proper tragic hero is one, not many—hence, as Aeschylus retorts angrily to Euripides, one cannot claim that Oedipus became wretched; he was in fact wretched all along (*Frogs* 1182–1188). The implicit contrast to the rags the comic chorus is dressed in (404 ff.), or to the mutability of character that the *Frogs* has just presented in Dionysus and Xanthias, does not undercut the point. It rather makes clear the very different approaches that should characterize tragedy and comedy.

2.3 *Chorus*

Comedy's emphasis on a multiplicity of views also comes out in its use of the chorus. Just as comedy distinguishes itself from tragedy by calling attention to its costumes, it distinguishes itself by highlighting the role of the chorus, not least in the flamboyance with which the comic chorus could be dressed. In contrast, as evidenced by the view that the tragic chorus gradually faded in importance, the chorus in tragedy, at least after Aeschylus, tends to remain in the background and maintain a fairly consistent persona.[98] And while tragedy, like comedy, tends not to use "ordinary" citizen males as its chorus, it does so in a far less startling manner.[99] It seems impossible to imagine, for example, a tragic parallel to the *Frogs*, where the initial chorus of frogs is suddenly replaced by a chorus of Eleusinian worshippers. Nor can we imagine a tragic version of the chorus drawing attention to their appearance, in rags, "for laughter / and for cheapness" (404–405) (the year 405 not being a prosperous one for

97 As Amphiaraus (*Seven* 592–594; *Republic* 361e): "he wishes not to seem best, but to be it" and see Thumiger, 2007, 51–52. Perhaps ironically Euripides fr. 963 expresses the idea exactly: "To thine own self be true"; Gibert, 1995, 20 and 16–20 for the link between "self" and "same."

98 See Conacher, 1996, 150–176 for Aeschylus' exceptionally active choruses and their generally consistent persona and Mastronarde, 2010, 88, 106 for the decline of the chorus, leading to Aristotle's complaint (*Poetics* 1456a19) that the chorus in Euripides and later tragedy is no longer part of the action. See also Taplin in Silk, 191–194 and Bierl, 2009, 55: "Contrary to tragedy, where the chorus tends to be made up of inconspicuous participants in the plot, such as old men or female bystanders, and is therefore rather straightforward and predictable in terms of its role, the choruses of Old Comedy represent a considerable surprise and the central performative event for the audience."

99 For the implications on the way in which the chorus does or does not focalize the play for the audience see Budelmann, 2000, 195–206; Vernant, 1988, 23–28; Easterling in Pelling, 1997, 21–37.

Athens).[100] Comedy further draws attention to the chorus, and increases the audience's anticipation, by having their entry announced well ahead of time, as in *Acharnians*, *Wasps*, or *Knights*; by giving the characters on stage a lengthy discussion of the entrance, as in *Clouds*; or by having them appear in an utterly improbable place, as in *Peace*. Even more emphatically, the comic poets, unlike anything in tragedy, occasionally took the elaborate step of differentiating the chorus members, as appears in the lengthy and detailed introduction of each individual chorus member in *Birds*.[101]

And yet, despite this elaborate introduction, and despite the chorus's extensive participation in the first half of the play, in almost all of Aristophanes' extant comedies, the chorus, in the second half, all but disappears.[102] Even in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, where the entire play revolves around the chorus's hostility to Euripides, the chorus adds only two odes after the *parabasis* (947 ff., 1136 ff.) and contributes to the action only by suddenly making peace—in three lines of dialogue, the last of which leaves Euripides to wrap up the plot (1164, 1170–1171). Otherwise, excepting only the *Clouds* (which is in many ways exceptional), the chorus does not influence the action in the second half of an Aristophanes play. In the *Acharnians*, the chorus's role after the *parabasis* consists simply of envying Dikaiopolis. In *Knights*, the chorus's function is confined to eliciting information from Demos (1111 ff.) and the now victorious sausage seller (1315 ff.). In the *Wasps*, the chorus, who were initially jury-mad, lose their connection to juries and add a second *parabasis* and a choral interlude, elicit a description of Philocleon from the slave, and provide background music for Philocleon's final dance (1265 ff., 1296 ff., 1450 ff., 1518 ff.). In the *Peace*, where the chorus has almost no character at all after the *parabasis*, they twice set up parallel scenes, provide one interlude, and join in the exit song (856–867 and 909–921; 939–955 and 1023–1038, 1126 ff.). In *Frogs*, the initiates become, all but explicitly, simply a generic comic chorus, while in *Birds*, despite their new sovereignty, the only thing the chorus does after the *parabasis* is to build the walls of Peisetairos' city, as reported in a messenger speech.[103] The one exception, aside from the *Clouds*, is *Lysistrata*, where the split chorus of men and women remain both consistent and important up to their final, significant, reconciliation.

100 See Sommerstein, 2009, 259 and for additional bibliography.

101 See Aristophanes' *Islands*, Eupolis' *Cities* (Rusten, 2011, 312) and A. Wilson, 1977 for other examples.

102 A tendency not often commented on. See Sifakis, 1971, 23–29; Revermann, 2006, 100; Bierl, 2009, 46, 67 for exceptions.

103 As Dover, *Frogs*, 68–69; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 197–198.

In a way, however, the reason for the difference is obvious: not that the chorus is strangely inactive toward the end of Athenian comedy, but rather that they were strangely active before. As Ley has pointed out, the major feature that distinguishes the comic from the tragic chorus is its aggression.[104] In plays like *Acharnians*, *Birds*, or *Women at the Thesmophoria* (and, for the first chorus, *Frogs*), this aggression is directed against the hero, while in *Knights*, *Peace*, and *Wasps*, the chorus battles instead against the hero's antagonist. In either case, however, after the *parabasis* either the contest is over, so that there is no one for the chorus to fight (*Acharnians*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, *Birds*), or else the actors take over the contest themselves (*Knights*, *Women at the Thesmophoria*). In tragedy, in contrast, it is unusual for the chorus to engage in any competition at all. Aside from a few of Aeschylus' choruses, like the Eumenides or suppliants, Euripides' *Bacchae* is nearly unique in having a tragic chorus markedly engaged in the action, either for or against the protagonist.[105]

The characteristic role of the comic chorus, then, seems to have resulted from comedy's tendency to engage the hero and the chorus in a contest.[106] The result was a draw, in which the first half of the comedy highlights the chorus and the second belongs to the hero. This is not because one defeats the other: even when the contest is between them the chorus inevitably (with the exception of *Clouds*) comes to agree with the hero. It is rather that as the individual voice of the comic protagonist increasingly asserts itself, the collective voice of the chorus fades into the background. In comedy, the chorus's concluding, and often exuberant exit tends often to celebrate a triumph in which they, at best, are only peripherally involved.[107]

As we will see, however, in examining particular plays, although the collective voice may fade, it does not disappear. Comedy is particularly notable for maintaining two opposite points of view at the same time. As Bierl has pointed out, the chorus remains involved in the narrative of the play even when its role becomes increasingly a reminder of the here and now of the perfor-

104 Ley, 2007, 181–199.

105 For the *Bacchae* see Segal, 65–86 in Edmunds and Wallace, and overall Ley, 2007, 198–199. In both the *Ajax* and the *Philoctetes* the chorus, although dependent on the hero, are also notable for their inefficacy.

106 This characteristic contest may be linked to actors and chorus coming from separate sources in comedy while in tragedy the actors emerged from the chorus itself.

107 See Roberts, 1987, esp. 61–62 on the tragic chorus as a "boundary figure" appropriately marking the end of the play. The point is also worth bearing in mind for the final role of the comic chorus.

mance.[108] Reinforced by the chorus's dominance in the first half, their now marginal position remains important to the play, even after they have accepted the comic hero's triumph. This will prove true of the Acharnians' exclusion from Dikaiopolis' peace, the wasps' observation of Philocleon's lawlessness, the oddity of the knights' alliance with the lowborn sausage seller, the birds' dispossession, or the threat that Euripides may still reveal the "truth" about the chorus of *Women at the Thesmophoria*. The conflict between chorus and hero has, in each of these cases, not disappeared, but rather has moved from influencing the plot to influencing the audience's perception of the hero. And, as is usual in an Aristophanes play, the point is not to decide which of the two is right. It is rather to notice that, in line with comedy's usual inclusion of multiple points of view, both are.

2.4 *Language and Props*

> A Protestant man lived among Catholic neighbors and all was well, except that every Friday night he grilled a steak in the backyard. Finally the neighbors, driven to distraction, suggested he convert. "How's that?" asked the man. "It's easy," said the neighbors. "The priest sprinkles some water on you and says, 'Now, Protestant, you are a Catholic,' and it's done." So the man converts.
>
> All was well until the following Friday, when the new convert began grilling his steak on the barbecue. But just as the startled neighbors were going over to protest, they saw him go into the house, bring out some water, sprinkle it on the steak, and say, "Now, steak, you are a herring."

The tendency of tragedy toward elevation and unity, and of comedy toward polyphony and dissonance, continues in their treatment both of language and of physical objects. While tragedy incorporates language and stage objects within its overall emotional drive, comedy, like the joke above, delights in the human attempt to recreate the world through language, and in the world's

108 Bierl, 2009, 47. Lowe in Kozak points out as well that comic space tends to stay fixed after the *parabasis*, implying somewhat less focus on the recreative aspect of the hero or heroine's "big idea."

resistance to that attempt—you may call it a herring, but the point is that it still tastes like a steak. In tragedy both language and the material world are imbued with a deeper reality that emerges in the course of the play. In comedy both language and the physical refuse to be so subsumed.

Comic polyphony and tragic unity emerge in the most literal terms in the genres' diction. Comedy is deeply interested in the different ways that people talk; tragic characters, like epic ones, all speak the same language.[109] Despite occasional experiments, in tragedy, heroes, servants, women, and foreigners generally share a tragic diction that extends even to the serious characters in satyr drama. Despite Aeschylus' inclusion of Persian words in the *Persians*, the language of the Persian characters, from Darius and the Queen to the messenger, is that of any Aeschylean tragedy.[110] Clytemnestra may entertain the thought that the barbarian Cassandra cannot communicate in Greek (*Agam.* 1050–1061), but neither she nor Aeschylus takes it seriously. Orestes claims to disguise his voice with a Phocian accent (*Libation Bearers*, 560–564), but it is not discernable in the text, while the shepherds of *Oedipus Tyrannos* speak a language that is not, in any marked way, different from the king's.[111]

Comedy, in contrast, loves language's fluidity, arbitrariness, and multiple forms. Dialects abound, from the Megarian in the *Acharnians* to Lampito's

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109 Hall, 2010, 153: "Tragedy's medium of communication operates at a more heightened level of reality than everyday speech. The same language is shared by all the characters, whatever their ethnicity, gender, or class"; Rosenbloom in Carter, 360; Lowe, 2008, 26 contrasting the variety of comic language to tragedy, where "all the characters speak within a homogenous linguistic register"; Easterling in Pelling, 1997, 23. In *Cyclops* Polyphemus and Odysseus speak good tragic Greek, drunk or sober, as Ussher, 1978, 207–208. For the occasional experiment, as the messenger in *Antigone*, see Ringer, 1998, 71–73 on a move towards comedy rather than naturalism, or on the Phrygian slave in *Orestes*, Dunn, 1996, 170–173; O'Brien in Cropp et al., 1986, 213–227; or on fr. 670 of Euripides' *Stheneboea*, Collard et al., *Euripides*, 1.97. For comic and colloquial elements in tragedy, Sommerstein in Willi; M.L. West in Craik, 3–12, and in Euripides in particular, Collard in Roisman, 1.236–237. As Plutarch (*Moral.* 853c–d; Dobrov in Dobrov, 1995, 51–57), for all its variety, Aristophanic language (unlike Menander's) is not differentiated by character. See finally Willi in Willi, 111–125 on tragic and comic language forming in distinction to one another, with comedy adopting an artificial "profession of 'Atticness'" (121).

110 Similarly in Euripides, as Saïd in Harrison, 2002, 68–69; Mastronarde, 2010, 210–211; and see Walcott, 1976, 69–70 for the Greekness of "alien languages" in tragedy. Hall, 2006, 288–320 sees women and foreigners as more likely to be given lyric parts, although the amount of exceptions is notable.

111 Garvie, *Choephoroi*, 197 describes Orestes' speech as "normal tragic Attic Greek" and see P.D. Arnott, 1989, 86–87 and Revermann, 2006, 54–56.

Spartan dialect in the *Lysistrata*. So also do "foreign" tongues, from the *Acharnians*' pseudo-Persian, to the pseudo-Greek of the Scythian archer in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, to the slave's "nopapapettabo" on the New York "Goose" vase.[112] A particular point is made of the fact that men and women speak differently (as *Assem.* 155–192); comic capital is made of Alcibiades' lisp (*Wasps* 44–46) and of an actor's mispronunciation (*Frogs* 304); puns are everywhere; words, in the persons of Aristophanes' "female abstractions" such as Harvest or Reconciliation, come to life and appear physically onstage; and language turns its purely arbitrary associations, such as that of *polis*, city, and *polos*, sky, into fact.[113] Comedy, moreover, delights in the fluidity of words, as in the *Knights*' transformation of *molomen auto* ("let us go it") into *automolomen* ("let's run away" 21–26), and in their irrationality, as in Socrates' struggle with the discrepancy between grammatical and natural gender (*Clouds* 658–692). Changes of register, most often to and from tragic diction, are made as abrupt as possible, pointing out, on the way, that language creates its own emotional reality.[114] And at the utmost extremity of comic language (*WT* 295 ff., *Birds* 864 ff., 1035 ff., 1661–1666), people may even occasionally speak in prose.[115]

112 See Colvin in Harvey and Wilkins, 285–298, 294–295 for the vase and Long, 1986, for barbarians in Greek comedy generally. For dialect in comedy as not simply abusive see Colvin, 1999; Willi in Willi, 111–151 and 19–20 for a bibliography. Silk, 2000, 98–159 insightfully discusses this (99) and the features of comic language discussed below, as sudden switches in tone (137), lists (150 ff.), and discontinuity overall (157). See also Dobrov in Dobrov, 1995, 55–57 for Aristophanes' "polyphony" as opposed to the consistent language of later comedy and Hall, 2006, 227 for this as common in Old Comedy. Davies in Harrison, 2002, 166 points as well to comedy's differentiating various Greek dialects from barbarian speech. For other uses of dialect and pseudo-Greek see *Birds* 1615 ff., *Knights* 515–516 on Magnes, Eupolis *Helots* (Rusten, 2011, 243), Platon, *Cleophon* 61, *Cephisodorus* 14, Alexis 216.4, Philyllius *Cities* 10, Theopompus *Callaeschrus* 24, Strattis *Phoenician Women* 49.

113 See Platon fr. 52 on the power of the tongue and Bakola, 2010, 272–275 for the tendency throughout Old Comedy to reify language; Hall in Harvey and Wilkins, reprinted in Hall, 2006, 170–183 for "female abstractions" and Stafford, 2001, 27–35 for Indo-European feminine abstracts as the reason for the gender.

114 See, for example, *Assem.* 391–395. In contrast see Silk in Goldhill and Hall on tragedy's use of the same device to create a closure that is open-ended, challenging, satisfying, and "magisterial" (157).

115 Aside from Moliere's ever popular M. Jourdain, see Polonius' momentary lapse: "And then, sir, does he this—he does—what was I about to say? By the mass, I was about to say something / Where did I leave?" at which point Reynaldo completes the pentameter: "At 'closes in the consequence.'" (*Hamlet* 2.1.49–51).

As comedy delights in the arbitrariness of language, it is correspondingly skeptical of language's claims to be binding. As we will see, while it is a given of tragedy that an oracle has a divine origin and is fulfilled, it is a given of comedy that it is a human manipulative device.[116] Similarly, while lying is a serious matter in tragedy, as Sophocles makes thematic in *Philoctetes*, in comedy it is all but taken for granted.[117] As with the Megarian farmer selling his little girls as "piggies" (*Acharn.* 764 ff.), Philocleon's claim that the flute-girl he has made off with is his torch (*Wasps* 1370 ff.), the Spartan herald in *Lysistrata* who claims to have a letter-staff under his cloak (991), the in-law's description of last year's Thesmophoria or Mica's of birthing her wineskin (*WT* 620 ff., 741 ff.), Trugaios' promise that the Athenians will celebrate all festivals to Hermes (*Peace* 416–420), or nearly all of the *Knights*, comic characters regularly, in the Houyhnhnms' phrase, "say the thing that is not." Within five hundred lines of their solemn oath to refrain from sex, Lysistrata's allies are doing everything in their power to violate it (717 ff.). The sausage seller in *Knights* swears that he is a thief, and then boasts about swearing that he isn't (297–298, 417–428). Xanthias, in *Frogs*, emphatically and explicitly swears three times running that the nonexistent Empousa has gone (304–306), while Dionysus responds quite cheerfully to Euripides' admonition not to break his oath (1469–1470) with Euripides' own words: "My tongue swore; my heart is unsworn" (*Hipp.* 612, *Frogs* 1471). In contrast, Hippolytus, the tragic originator of the line, dies rather than violate even an oath he had repudiated.[118]

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116 See Chapter Five in particular on the special case of Paphlagon's oracle in *Knights*.

117 Expressed as a principle for comedy by Ameipsias, *Adulterers* 12; in contrast Hall, 2010, 160: "Characters in Greek tragedy who are justifiably accused of perjury are all punished for it." Aside from Orestes, whose false identity seems traditional, lies in Aeschylus or Sophocles are confined to Clytemnestra's in the *Agamemnon* (and see Thumiger, 2007, 89: "the effect is not so much to deceive—the chorus of elderly men are not a threat to her—as to project the ambiguity of her role"), Lichas' in the *Women of Trachis*, made from pity (479–483), Ajax's speech to Tecmessa and the *Philoctetes*, where Schein in Pedrich and Oberhelman points out the rarity of falsehood in Sophocles, and so the impact, while Greengard, 1987, 15–33, 99–105, sees the falsehood as breaking tragic convention: "The ambivalence of the audience reaction corresponds to the ambiguity of the dramatic form. The tragic figure seems trapped in a story, a myth, that is wrong for him and for his tragically heroic nature" (31). Musurillo, 1974 examines Euripides' much greater interest in lies while Sutton in Easterling and Knox, 100 points to the frequent deception in satyr drama as a source for the *Helen*, *Ion*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*.

118 Similarly, the chorus allows Hippolytus to die rather than break their oath to Phaedra. The mere suggestion of perjury made the line notorious, Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1416a28; Mikalson, 1991, 228; Avery, 1968; Lefkowitz, 1989 for the lawsuit citing the line as evidence of Euripi-

Another indication of the genres' different approaches to language appears in the characters' names. In tragedy the nomen/omen relation holds; a tragic hero's name is also his destiny. That Polyneices is "much-quarreling," Pentheus "sorrow," Philoctetes "lover of possessions" or "possessed of friends," Ajax "alas," and Oedipus the "swollen-foot" or the "knower" are fundamental to the plays they inhabit.[119] There is not only necessity here, but also loss, as the heroes' names, which should be most their own, turn out instead to have meanings independent, and determinative, of their identities. In contrast, the names of characters in Old Comedy, such as Strepsiades, the "twister," the "Paphlagonian" or "splutterer" (*Peace* 314, *Knights* 919), or Peisetairos, the "comrade-persuader" are chosen to suit the plot, as Aristophanes points out in his joke on the characters' names in *Wasps*: "The old man is named Love-cleon (Philocleon) and his *son* is Hate-Cleon (Bdelycleon). No, really …" (133–134).[120] As the "no, really" (*nai ma Dia*) reminds us, it is not the uncanny power of language that we see in the suitability of comic names, but rather the playwright's invention. Pheidippides' name makes the same point, that language is essentially arbitrary, in the opposite way. The name, chosen because his mother wanted the aristocratic "*hippos*" ("horse") and his father the family name Pheidon, "thrifty" (*Clouds* 65, 134), indicates that neither had any real concern with what the words mean.[121]

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des' impiety. See Dillon, 1995, 139; Fletcher, 2012, 12–13 for the sausage seller; 2003 and 2012 for the importance of oaths, and 2012, 163 for Pheidippides swearing opposite oaths at *Clouds* 90, 108; Mikalson, 1991, 80–87 for oaths in tragedy and punishment in the rare instances of perjury, and for the Guard in the *Antigone* where "the casual taking and breaking of the oath … make the guard resemble, in this regard, a comic character" (85).

119 As *Ajax* 370, 430, 904, 914; *Bacchae*, 320, 367, 506–508 etc. For the multiple meanings of Oedipus' name see C. Segal, 2001, 111; Goldhill, 1986, 216 ff.; Rehm, 1994, 110; for Ajax, C. Segal, 1981, 133; for Pentheus, C. Segal, 1997, 251. For other cases see Whitman, 1996, 210–212 on "Polyneices" the "man of the heavy curse" (212); Zeitlin in Burrian 59 on "Hippolytus" who "looses horses" and 191 n. 16 for a bibliography. Neoptolemus (the "new warrior") and Philoctetes also have significant names, as *Philoct.* 672–673. For cledomancy see Silk, 2000, 354–355; Kerrigan, 1996, 364–366; Peradotto, 1969a; Hutchinson, *Seven*, 135: "In Aeschylus we see the crucial moment revealing at last to men the true and permanent nature of a being, contained in its name."

120 See Dover, 1972, 89 for *Knights*, Sommerstein, *Birds*, 201, for *Birds*. As Taplin, 1986, 167 points out, fifth-century Greeks also shared their names with comic characters, but not with tragic ones. For Aristophanes' preference for "speaking" names see Ercolani in Kozak.

121 The tone appears again in the "Cronippos" with which the Worse Logos mocks the Better (1070). Had Pheidippides' mother cared about real horses (as Sommerstein, *Clouds*, 162) the reason would be status, like uncle Megacles (whose name is chosen for its "greatness") driving to the Acropolis in his *xustis* (70), a saffron-dyed *himation* "worn by charioteers to

The result is to make out of the common name "Pheidippus" a variant whose meaning, "horse-thrift," is both a contradiction in terms and precisely what Pheidippides is not.[122]

Aristophanes goes even further in playing with the tragic convention of identifying characters with their names. Tragic characters tend to have stable identities, and the implications of those identities are often revealed in the meanings of their names. In contrast, the names of Aristophanes' heroes often point out exactly the fluidity of their characters. Dikaiopolis is both the "just citizen" and the "just city"; Philocleon drops his love for Cleon halfway through the play; Strepsiades moves from a "twister" in regard to his debts (*Clouds* 36) to a "justice-twister" (434, 450, etc., and see 1455) and twister of words; and Trugaios the "vintner" is equally Trugaios the "tragi-comedian." Even in the *Knights*' parody of the revelation of a significant name, Agoracritus, the sausage seller, interprets his name to mean not "chosen by the Assembly" but "quarreling in the agora." Thus etymologized, the revelation implies that his newfound position, like the meaning of his name, is purely a matter of interpretation.

What lies behind the differences in comic and tragic approaches to language seems to be opposite views of the nature of *logos*, a difference that emerges most clearly in the contrast between tragic irony and comic ambivalence. Tragic language is often ambiguous, as in, for example, Heracles' "release from labors" (*Trach.* 79–81, 1169–1171), or the "fitting contests" that Dionysus declares await Pentheus (*Bacchae* 964), or the "fulfillment" Clytemnestra asks for Agamemnon (*Agam.* 973–974). Similarly, a character's words may mean more than the character knows, or more than those who hear them know, as when Clytemnestra points out to Agamemnon that their "child" is not present (*Agam.* 877–879), when Creon declares that one can know a man's true character only when he has had the rule (*Ant.* 175–177), when Oedipus swears to work for Laius as for a father (*OT* 264), or when Medea declares that their children will resolve the quarrel between herself and Jason (*Medea* 894ff.). This ambiguity, however, is fundamentally ironic: the words have an essential meaning, just one that is not apparent to those who hear them.[123] When

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this day, and by kings in tragedy" (Scholiast, and see *Republic* 420e on tradesmen got up in *xustides*). Lower-class names in *-ippos* presumably copied the elite.

122 See Sommerstein, *Clouds*, 163. "Pheidippides" is also attested as an alternative to Philippides (Herod. 6.105), and appears in Thera and Eretria (Dover, *Clouds*, 75–76). Although, as MacDowell, 1995, 115, the name in this regard would not be absurd, the description of its origin makes it so.

123 See G.B. Walsh on language in Aeschylus: "The magical validity of words also operates

Aristophanes parodies this view of language, as he does in the *Knights*, the joke is that the "deeper meaning" of the sausage seller's name refers us only to the self-interested squabbling that constitutes democracy (as in Chapter Five). The point of comic ambiguity is not that there is a deeper meaning, but that, as in a joke (What's black and white and red/read all over?), a word's different, even opposite meanings are all equally valid.[124] Thus the double meaning of *sponde*, both "libation" and "peace-treaty," means that the *Acharnians*' Dikaiopolis can purchase a thirty-year one for himself, while in the *Birds* the similarity of the words *polos*, "sky," and *polis* essentially creates Peisetairos' new city (172–184). In tragedy the irony of language may reveal deeper levels of reality at first inaccessible to humans; in comedy what we get is a pun.[125]

The fifth century was involved in a debate over whether language should be regarded as "natural" and so of the world of *physis*, or as purely conventional and so of the world of *nomos*, a debate Aristophanes thoroughly exploits in the second half of *Frogs*.[126] Here, in contrast to Dionysus' initial play with

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actively, by influencing the nature of things. Thus, although men sometimes fail to control their speech or to grasp its significance, it changes the world around them" (1984: 63–64); C. Segal, 1981, 243 on *Oedipus Tyrannos* 1169 ff.: "the *logos* seems to take over and become almost independent of Oedipus" and, 1995, 161–179 referencing Freud's *Language, and the Unconscious*: "poetic language 'means' by indirect suggestion and paradox as well as by (or in deliberate contradiction with) one-to-one correspondence" (163); and Burian in Easterling 1997, 199–201 on the "ominous quality of language itself" in tragedy (200). For Sophocles see Kirkwood, 1994, 247–294 and Winnington-Ingram, 1980, 328–329 for a basic "terrible and pitiable" irony.

124 The answer to the riddle is, depending on the teller, a newspaper, or in a derivative version, a nun falling downstairs. As Goldhill, 1991, 216, puts it: "As comedy ever demonstrates, language leaks. The poets' *agon* of and on words provides a paradigmatic case of comedy's archetypal practice: to explore and explode the limits of language both as a signifying system and as a medium of social exchange." Freud, 1960, 39 ff., sees this "double-meaning" as the fundamental element of jokes.

125 As also in comedy's interest in the motif of gods and men having different names for things, as Cratinus 258.5, 352, Epicharmus 42.10, Sannyrion 1. As Goldhill, 2009: "In contrast with the great heroes and grand actions that dominate tragic theatre, apparently trivial, unnoticed, and mundane words turn out to conceal a buried life of dangerous, excessive meaning, over which the characters have little control. The word in passing, as Oedipus found at the feast, is never just passing. It is always all too late that we learn fully the significance of the language we use and hear." Or, as C. Segal, 1981, 52–59, tragic language may aim at this, but fail: "Cassandra's language sums up the paradox of the tragic situation: the attempt to communicate that which is incommunicable" (57). For an analysis of the double meaning of words in comedy in relation to humor theory see Robson, 2006, 11–12.

126 See Guthrie, 1971, 204–219 on the *nomos* / *physis* debate in relation to language. This oppo-

language (21–34, 83–85, 120–134), the words of tragedy are treated as objects, to be wielded like stones (*Frogs* 854–855), dieted and exercised (939 ff.), or, quite literally, weighed (1365 ff.). In contrast, the comic view of language appears in *Clouds*, where "Socrates'" insistence that language reflect reality results in the creation of a "fowl" and "fowless" (666) and the transformation of the Democritean "Vortex" from a physical principle to the new king of the gods (379 ff., 1470).[127] Strepsiades, it turns out, was wrong to believe that he could harness as slippery a force as words purely for his own benefit. But despite the lesson he learns, he was perfectly correct to believe that the "stronger" *logos*, the *logos* that sees itself as subject to a greater authority, was no match for the "weaker" one, the *logos* that relies purely on its own powers of invention.

Just as comedy adopts a view of language opposite to that of tragedy, it also adopts an opposite view of physical objects. Greek tragedy does not employ many props, but when it does the objects used tend to be both singular and crucial.[128] In the *Oresteia* in particular, numerous studies have considered how Aeschylus' central images are also physically incorporated as props, as with Clytemnestra's tapestry, Agamemnon's net, or the red robes of the Furies.[129] Similarly, Ajax's sword, Electra's urn, or Philoctetes' bow all serve as focal points for their respective plays.[130] Like Shakespeare's later use of the same

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sition is played out, for example, in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* between Philoctetes' "natural" and Odysseus' conventional, sophistic view of language. Philoctetes thus connects Neoptolemus' words and deeds to the nature his father begot in him (*ouden exo tou phueusantos* 904–905) while for Odysseus it is "the tongue that guides, and not the deed" (98–99), for which see Blundell, 1989, 184–225; Goldhill in Easterling, 142–144.

127 As Willi, 2003, 100.

128 On props generally see Sofer, 2003 and in Greek drama, Revermann and Tordoff, both in Harrison and Liapis. Ley in McDonald and Walton, 275: "in comparison with Aristophanic comedy, the material world is sparsely represented in all fifth-century tragedy, as if there was a conscious process of abstraction" and 276: "Comedy rarely exploits a property for long, discarding objects quickly and absolutely. Tragedy, in contrast, may cling to a property throughout its action." Chaston, 2010 describes the use of props in tragedy as a "conceptual peg" (5) linking past, present, and future (32–33); for a specific use in Euripides, Kirkpatrick and Dunn, 2002 esp. 53; Luschnig in Roisman 2.1016–1022 for a list of props, and Chapter Seven for the contrast in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

129 See Hall, 2010, 223; Conacher, 1996, 144; Lebeck, 1971; Goheen, 1955; and Chaston, 2010, 20–21.

130 See Fletcher in Harrison and Liapis on Ajax and Philoctetes. Ley in McDonald and Walton, 276–278 cites as well Deianara's casket in *Women of Trachis* and Medea's box. For the overall role of objects in tragedy, as opposed to comedy see C. Segal, 1980; McLeish, 1980, 66; Taplin, 1978, 77–100 and, with a more general reference, Bergson, 1911, 51. For Electra's

technique, with Desdemona's handkerchief, for example, or Yorick's skull, the physical object is imbued and persists throughout the play, diffracting the play's meaning as if through a prism.[131] That meaning, however, does not include the object's physicality. Whatever independent presence Philoctetes' bow may have onstage, it never gets tripped over.

In comedy, in contrast, the fluidity and arbitrariness of language is balanced against the sheer intractability of the physical. Here objects exist largely to be squeezed into, run around, piled up into unmanageable heaps, hoisted, ducked, and generally struggled with.[132] In direct visual contrast to the starkness of the tragic stage, Aristophanes delights in scenes such as the rival "armings" of Lamachus and Dikaiopolis (*Acharn.* 1097 ff.) or the gift competition between Paphlagon and the sausage seller (*Knights* 1151–1220), where prop after prop is hauled out and deposited onstage.[133] The general insubordination of the

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urn see Easterling in Easterling 1997, 168; Ringer, 1998, 156–157; C. Segal, 1981, 278–289. On Ajax's sword see Kirkwood, 1994, 222–223; Ringer, 1998, 40–41; C. Segal, 1981, 116–118; Taplin, 1978, 85–88; and Kott, 1973, 64–65, who sees the sword as the fixed point of the play. For Euripides' more cynical use of objects, such as the miraculous non-deteriorating wicker basket of the *Ion*, Taplin, 1978, 95–98. For props "speaking" in tragedy, as the letter in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* or Phaedra's tablet see Ley in McDonald and Walton, 278. It is also noteworthy, although beyond our consideration here, that many of these (including Desdemona's handkerchief) are associated with rare instances of deceptive speech, as C. Segal, 1980, 131–132, 135–136.

131 Styan, 1975, 44: "In Shakespeare, properties are few, but when one is introduced it will be both an extension of a character's mood as in realistic drama, and a strong, often symbolic, indication of theme."

132 See Bergson's view of comedy as the living and fluid made thing-like and inert (1911, 38–40); Tordoff in Harrison and Liapis, 89–110 and Taplin, 1986, 172 for comedy's contrast with tragedy in its love of props; Poe, 2000, 286 for the frequency of props put to no real use; Slater, 1999, 366 for comic props directing the audience's attention and Revermann, 2006, 203–205 for the use and abuse of props in *Clouds*. For props in other comedies see Magnes' *Barbaron-players*, Cratinus' *Wineflask*, Platon's *Props* (136–142), Hermippus, 63. For comedy's interest in the physical see Silk, 1988, 28 and Kerr, 1967, 144: "[The comedian] must render up to matter the things that are matter's. He can free himself of God but not of the need for a haircut."

133 Gould in Easterling and Knox, 14–15 points out that on the bare tragic stage props would stand out powerfully. See also the piling on of props for Philocleon's home trial (*Wasps* 798 ff.), Euripides' costumes in the *Acharnians* or Agathon's in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, the objects used to delay Cinesias in the *Lysistrata* or the list of props for Eupolis' *Cities*, 218, 240, 242 (Rusten, 2011, 254–257). The device is also comic in frustrating our desire to maintain an individual importance for each object. P.D. Arnott, 1962, 69–71 points out the need, easily forgotten in reading a text, to carry off objects deposited onstage.

physical world that these heaps imply appears throughout Aristophanes, from Trugaios' distrust of the crane (*mechane*, *Peace* 174–176) to "Palamedes'" difficulty in inscribing his oar-tablets (*WT* 778–781) to the running joke of Xanthias' baggage in the *Frogs*.[134] Similarly, the humor of animals onstage, such as Trugaios' sheep, Peisetairos' and Euelpides' birds, or Xanthias' donkey, lies largely in the audience's awareness that the animal may or may not keep to its prompts.[135] The common joke that attempts to transform an object into its opposite—a helmet crest into an aid for vomiting (*Acharn.* 584–589), for example, a breastplate into a commode (*Peace* 1224–1239), or a pot into a shield (*Birds* 355–363)—visually points out the resistance of the actual object to its new name. The same point can be made through jokes on our (unfulfillable) desire that objects would behave as we wish, as in the comic fantasy of utensils that work themselves (Crates' *Beasts* 268D) or the numerous "golden age" comedies in which food appears at our beck and call. Aristophanes underlines the contrast by piling up huge word lists just as he piles up huge heaps of props.[136] The attempt, however, only reveals the recalcitrance of things. At the end of the day, no one has to come and clear the words off the stage as they do the props (*Peace* 729–732; *Birds* 448).

On the comic stage the ability of language to float up into the stratosphere is thus given a counterweight. This is not only the world of things; it is also, as is made vivid in Socrates' first floating appearance in *Clouds*, the weight of our own bodies. In one of the most obvious and persistent contrasts between tragedy and comedy, tragic heroes never need to relieve themselves, while comedy is filled with all the involuntary physical responses—defecation, erections, farts, and vomiting—that culture attempts to cover over. In this way the body's automatic responses to pain, fear, sexual arousal, and repletion

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134 *Frogs* 12–15 also points out that baggage jokes were a running gag throughout comedy, used by Phrynichus, Lycis and Ameipsias, and illustrated in Rusten, 2011, 433, 441, 453. For the use of the stage altar (as *WT* 886–888, *Peace* 942) see P.D. Arnott, 1962, 43–63. Jouan, 1989, 24 ff. and Platter, 2006, 155–156 point out Aristophanes' emphasis on the physical qualities of Euripides' heroes and Whitehorne, 2002 the props that characterize the "intellectuals" while Poe, 2000, 267 points to props' "comic ineffability."

135 For the donkey (and the *Knights*' horses) as played by humans, Stone, 1981, 351, 378–379.

136 For "golden age" references, often combined with word lists see Telecleides *Amphictyons* 1, Cratinus *Wealth-gods*, 176, Crates *Beasts* 16, 17, Pherecrates *Mine Workers* 113, *Savages* 1–2, 137, Eupolis *Golden Age* 300–316, Metagenes *Thourian-Persians* 6, Nicophron *Sirens* 21. For word lists in Aristophanes (including *Assemblywomen* 1169–1177, the longest word in Classical Greek) see Silk, 2000, 148 ff. and for the comic fragments, Callias 264, Pherecrates *Persians* 138 and *Cheiron* 158, Platon *Phaon* 188, 189, Nicophron *Hand-Bellies* 6, 10, Archippus *Fish* 24.

parallel the refusal of comic objects to mold themselves to our use. Comedy may portray meaning as created by the human will, but it also balances our dominion by revealing that we too are merely physical beings, and as such in as little control of ourselves as we are of the physical world around us.[137]

As we've already seen, ugliness was what visually differentiated comedy from tragedy. This quality of being ugly, or in cultural terms "shameful" (*aischron*), is directly related to comedy's focus on the physical.[138] The huge bellies and rumps, gaping mouths, and extensive phalluses of the comic stage focus the audience's attention on the purely physical needs of the human body. These needs, in general, were not registered in tragedy, as they were not registered within the civic ideal. A Freudian interpretation suggests the connection: it is exactly because it is culturally forbidden that the exposure of the physical is funny. This, then, is the final way that comic ugliness was in dialectic with tragedy. Comedy, unlike tragedy, makes a point of the intransigence of the physical world, with a special focus on the intransigence of the human body. Within the dramatic festivals this focus must have reminded the spectators of what tragedy, and the ideal of the city, left out.

3 Comedy, Tragedy, and Euripides

As I have argued, the opposition of comedy and tragedy, which has now become a commonplace, began with a very particular set of circumstances in a very particular time and place. As the ever-popular image of comic and tragic masks demonstrates, the pairing had lasting consequences. In Athens, however, it did not outlive the circumstances that had given rise to it. As Mastronarde has pointed out, Greek drama was not a fixed ideal, but a continually changing and developing art form.[139] Aristophanes, accordingly, must be seen as responding

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137 Kirkpatrick and Dunn, 2002 point to a similar use of the physical in Euripides' *Heracles* as establishing an indeterminacy of identity.

138 Plato, accordingly, would have only slaves and foreigners play in comedy (*Laws* 7.816) since it involves imitating the *aischron* rather than the *kalon*. See Mitchell, 2009, 4 for the theme on comic vases.

139 Mastronarde, 2010, 47–54. In this light see Roberts, 1984, 63 on the metatheatrical closure of Euripides' late plays: "There is nothing strange in a gradual move in tragedy to an obviously self-referential conclusion such as we find in comedy." I should also emphasize that my argument in no way implies that because Euripides does not follow the model of Aeschylus and Sophocles he is in any sense inferior as a dramatist. On the contrary,

to a very particular configuration of drama. Taplin has described this situation, one that set comedy and tragedy against each other, as developing through the course of Aeschylus' career and reaching its height between 440 and 415, the period that saw both Aristophanes' emergence as a comic poet and Euripides' increasingly bold experiments in genre-crossing. The fifth century thus saw both the development of the opposition and its collapse. On the side of comedy this occurred in the trends that would lead eventually to Menander. On the side of tragedy it was sparked by the experiments of Euripides.[140]

Many of Euripides' plays, like those of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, gain their effects through a contrast to the opposite genre. In other plays, however, his aim seems to have been to break through precisely this opposition.[141] Nor should it come as a surprise that it is Euripides who is the exception. Experimentation in Euripides' career goes as far back as his first extant play, when he closed the trilogy that contained the *Telephus* not with the standard satyr play but with the *Alcestis*, just as later his "escape dramas," such as the *Helen* or *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, would borrow a standard theme of satyr drama.[142] By its very nature, as a serious work taking on the

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Euripides' iconoclastic plays can be quite extraordinary, a feeling I suspect Aristophanes had as well.

140 See Torrance, 2013 esp. 282–298, for Euripides' particular use of comic techniques; Taplin, 1986, 165–166 on Euripides' comic elements undermining the polarization of comedy and tragedy; Lowe, 2008, 6–7; Tammaro in Medda et al; E. Segal in Griffiths. Adrados, 1975, 462–463 also sees comedy and tragedy first polarizing and then coming together, eventually resulting in New Comedy. On tragedy and comedy changing and approaching one another on the specific topic of sexuality see Craik in Sommerstein et al., 1993, 352–362 and for tragedy's approach to comedy in the fourth century Kuch, 545–558, in the same volume. Speight, 2001 discusses Hegel's sense of a movement from tragedy, which emphasizes necessity, to comedy, which is primarily self-reflexive, to romance, which focuses on reconciliation.

141 Euripides has traditionally been seen as an innovator, from Nietzsche to Jaeger in *Paedeia* who termed him "revolutionary." See Michelini, 1987 for Euripides' subversions of tradition and 3–51 for an extensive bibliography. See also Arnott in McAuslan and Walcot; Burnett, 1971; Arrowsmith, 1963 and 1999; Blondell et. al., 1999 and Foley in Revermann and Wilson, 19–27. Kovacs, 1987, 29 and *passim*, assumes this as the dominant view (which he opposes).

Aristotle's assessment: "although Euripides manages his plays badly in other respects, he is clearly the most tragic of poets" (*Poetics* 1453a) seems based on his dramas ending in misfortune, the topic of the paragraph. For pity and fear as making Euripides "most tragic" in Aristotle's view see Jones, 1962, 242; Zerba, 2002, 330; Pucci in Mossman, 139–169 and, for another view, Grube, 1989, 25–26. Kitto, 1939 points out that the experiments run throughout Euripides' career, and see Mastronarde in Cropp et al., 2000, 23–39.

142 See Chapter Two for escape in satyr drama. Sutton, 1974, 118–121 and 1980a, 184–190

role of a satyr play, a "prosatyric" play like the *Alcestis* crossed the boundary between comedy and tragedy. The same blend is accomplished within the *Alcestis* itself, in the inclusion of both tragedy, for example the child's lyric lament for his mother, and comedy, as with the drunken and gluttonous Heracles (393–415; 748 ff.; cf. *Wasps* 60, *Peace* 741, *Frogs* 60 ff.), the harshly realistic refusal of Admetus' father to die for him (675 ff.), and the curiously indeterminate, almost sophistic quality of Admetus' replies to Heracles (518 ff.).[143] In replacing the satyr play with this new hybrid, Euripides transformed a traditional genre into a more contemporary mode. He also blurred what may be the foundational distinction between comedy and tragedy.

That Euripides had an interest in moving tragedy into areas traditionally reserved for comedy is by no means a new observation.[144] In the larger picture, the move seems to be part of an overall tendency on Euripides' part to question convention, religious and social as well as dramatic. Although, as must always be kept in mind, Euripides' use of genre-stretching techniques and questions tells us nothing about his own religious or political views, and although particular instances of questioning convention are often not the final word of the play, the innovations have an impact, and they are numerous.[145] When Euripides' Electra, for example, points out the absurdity of supposing that Orestes would

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concludes that these plays, like the *Alcestis*, which also concerns entrapment and escape, were prosatyric. Griffith, 2002, 235–237 sees Euripides introducing satyric elements into the romances.

143 Seidensticker, 1982, 129–152 sees *Alcestis* as moving toward tragicomedy. See Shaw, 2014, 97; Marshall, 2000; Harrison in Roisman, 1194–1198 for the possible influence of the Morychides decree.

144 For Euripides' experimental works as comic see Pippin / Burnett, 1960 and 1971, 182–222; Knox, 1979, 250–274; Winnington-Ingram in Mossman, 47–63; Arrowsmith, 1963, 42; Seidensticker, 1982, *passim*; Dunn, 1996, 8 on how the late plays: "… introduce into tragedy the fortuitous logic of romance, the contradictory impulses of tragicomedy, and the prosaic course of narrative; both the end and the logic of tragedy become irrelevant as drama explores entirely new forms." Wright, 2005, 6–42 protests calling Euripides' experimental plays "comic," but primarily because he takes the term as derogatory: "Tragedies are (as Aristotle says) serious dramas; and the relabeling as '*un*-tragic' of plays which one does not like is simply an excuse to dismiss them." See Wright as well for a bibliography on views of Euripides as "untragic." For a similar (if ultimately unconvincing) treatment of Sophocles as politically and comically inspired see Greengard, 1987, esp. 51–67. Although Gregory in Mastronarde, 1999–2000 sees the "comic" in Euripides as eliciting a laugh, the comic elements of *Bacchae*'s cross-dressing scene (Foley in Mossman) show that the effect can be chilling.

145 Anne Burnett, for example (in Burian, 51), argues for Euripidean authorship of the *Rhesus* exactly as an "attack on the traditions of tragedy." See Eisner, 1979; W.G. Arnott, 1982

wear her shoe size or have the same color hair, she mocks both Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* (*LB* 168–234, *Elect.* 524–546) and the unthinking acceptance that tragedy asks of its audience.[146] Similarly, Electra's declaration that Orestes cannot have accomplished his task, since the messenger has not arrived (759), or Eteocles' declaration (in pointed contrast to the list in Aeschylus' *Persians*) that it would take too long to name the warriors (*Phoenician Women* 751) have plausibly been taken as jokes on theatrical convention as such.[147]

This tendency to subvert the conventions of the theater goes hand in hand with a tendency to question conventional values. Euripides' *Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, not to mention his *Orestes*, present us with Homeric "heroes" who, as they are motivated primarily by cowardice and self-interest, undermine both the heroic conventions of tragedy and its conventional appeals to patriotism, justice, and the gods.[148] In this way they seem also to belong to the comic rather than the tragic stage. Euripides' *deus ex machina* endings have similarly been seen as dramatizing an attitude cynical toward both conventional religion and conventional plot devices, while a play such as the *Ion*, it has been argued, demands that the audience think again about gods who traditionally engender heroes through rape.[149] The com-

and 1983; Hall, 2010, 267–268: "In *Heracles* Euripides forces his heroes, and thereby his audience, to leave heroic myth behind in the toy box, and to enter the more exacting adult world of moral responsibility, autonomy, and accountability"; and Goldhill, 1986, 244ff. for "the continually experimental pushing of the formal aspects of genre to and beyond its limits" (264). For Walton, 1980, 214 Euripides' plays "wreak havoc with preconceived ideas of Greek tragic form."

146 Torrance, 2013, 13–32 for a detailed consideration of Euripides' metapoetics in this scene.

147 Dover, *Frogs*, 37; Goldhill, 1986, 247–251; for realism and comic tone in the *Electra* overall Michelini, 1987, 181–185; for *Phoenician Women*, Hanink in Fontaine and Scafuro, 268.

148 Mikalson, 1991, 113–114 points out that false divination in Greek tragedy occurs only in Euripides' later plays; Reinhardt, 43, in Mossman cites Orestes' prayer as "the degeneration of the heroic and religious taken to absurdity." For the *Orestes* collapsing the values of the *Oresteia*, see Euben in Euben, 222–251. Ostwald in Breyfogle, 33–49 sees a genuine exploration of religion; Conacher, 1967, 13ff. an undermining; Wright, 2005, 339–362 points out that the gods are so bound up with the *polis* that Euripides' "not believing" in them is more like "not believing" in the royal family than like atheism (346); and see Mastronarde, 2002, 32–34 for a world "morally disquieting" but not godless and for further references. For Euripides not subverting conventional religion, Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003, 294ff.; Kovacs, 1987, 71–77; Lefkowitz in Mossman, 2003, and Heath, 1987c, 49–64 all of whom focus on detail rather than overall tone. For Euripides' implicit demand that gods should be moral, Goff, 1990, 83–85 and add *Bellerophon* fr. 292 (Collard et al., *Euripides*).

149 See Antiphanes 189 for the device as a "god of last resort"; Post, 1964, 104; Rehm, 1994, 70–

mentary on contemporary politics implicit in many of Euripides' antiwar plays (or, for that matter, in the pro-war, anti-Spartan attitude of the *Andromache*) disrupts the traditional mythic focalization of tragedy. And finally, Euripides' notorious fondness for characters who lie outside of the usual heroic pattern challenges both tragic convention and traditional values. Over and over again Euripides' characters—Medea, Hecuba, Heracles, Orestes, Iphigenia—refuse to be contained by the conventional roles that society, and the tragic theater, would impose upon them.[150]

The innovation of Euripides' "romances" or "melodramas," which contain elements of both tragedy and comedy, is thus not surprising. In introducing them, however, Euripides violated theatrical convention in a way more extreme than has commonly been recognized. The fact that the plays have happy endings, which, after all, is also true of the *Oresteia*, is of minor importance.[151] What is more significant is that plays such as *Helen*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, *Ion*, and *Orestes*, which take as their basic themes disguise, illusion, and problems of identity, also explore the possibility that human meaning is self-interested and self-made, and identity no more than a social fabrication.[152] It is a point of view that was traditionally the province of comedy. In adopting it Euripides has done nothing less than violate the fundamental structure of the dramatic festival, which dictated that a man could write comedy or tragedy, but not both.

The breakdown in the opposition of comedy and tragedy, however, did not begin entirely on the side of tragedy. On the side of the comic poets, terracotta figurines with padding and phalluses, but resembling the stock figures famil-

73; Dunn, 1996, 26–44; Arrowsmith, 1999, 223: "With one or two interesting exceptions, the finale of every play which closes in a divine epiphany subtly or jarringly fails to satisfy conventional expectations of resolution." Mastronarde (2010, 192) describes Apollo's intervention in *Orestes* as "controlling from the point of view of the characters and salvific from the point of the view of the poet's duty to the tradition." On the *Ion* see Hall, 2010, 278–279; Zeitlin, 1996, 328ff.; Mikalson, 1991, 90–91 as the only example in Greek tragedy of a false oracle; Scodel, 1999, 125 as undermining convention and see Bushnell, 1998, 116 for Teiresias' "I'm not speaking prophesy here: I'm talking about the facts" (*Bacchae* 368–369, her translation).

150 Goward, 1999, 126–129; Lawrence, 1997, 52; Hall, 1989, esp. 215–218 for Euripides' undercutting of the Greek / barbarian antithesis.

151 Mastronarde, 2010, 58.

152 See Chapter Seven, section one on Euripides' metatheater and Chapter Seven, section two on the *Helen*. For Jones, 1962, 260 Euripides "threatens to destroy the masking convention" by focusing underneath the surface.

iar from Menander, appear as early as the end of the fifth century.[153] As I have argued in the introduction, we have good reason to believe that Aristophanes' comedy was seen as representative. The figurines, however, indicate that this was not the entire story. As Euripides was experimenting with bringing elements of comedy onto the tragic stage, comedy seems also to have begun the move to Menander.[154] The result would be an inclusion in comedy of elements that had earlier appeared primarily in tragic drama: coherent plots, standard characters, universal settings, and a disappearance of the contemporary reference, personal attacks, and sheer fantasy that had distinguished Old Comedy. The two genres thus meet in the middle. From the in-between plays that brought tragedy and comedy together a new kind of drama, New Comedy, will emerge, one whose spiritual father is not Aristophanes but the iconoclastic experimenter Euripides.[155]

The most insistent testimony on Euripides' use of comic effects in tragedy comes, however, from Aristophanes himself. From his first extant play, the *Acharnians*, to the *Frogs*, staged just after Euripides' death, Aristophanes consistently ridicules Euripides for his use of comic devices: according to Aristophanes, Euripides depicts rogues and villains; he reduces the great heroes of myth to the level of ordinary people; he dresses his heroes in rags and loads them with ordinary objects as props; he is a master of stage tricks and sophisms, more interested in appearances than in truth; and he mocks and undermines traditional values and conventional forms (e.g., *Acharn.* 395ff., *Peace* 532–534, *Knights* 18, *Clouds* 1369–1378, *WT*, 450–452, *Frogs* 95–104, 771–776, 1078–1082, etc.). The complication is that all the qualities that Aristo-

153 For the figurines see J.R. Green, 1994, 34–38; Green and Handley, 1995, 58–66; Webster, 1978, 40–61; Rusten, 2011, 30, 430–433.

154 Silk, 2000, 51 sees this beginning in Crates and Pherecrates as well as Aristophanes' *Cocalus*, which, according to the *Life of Aristophanes* "introduced rape and recognition and all the other features picked up by Menander" (3.2.3; Lefkowitz, 1981, 170–171); contrary see Sommerstein, 2009, 272–288. R. Rosen in Dobrov, 1995 and Csapo in Depew and Obbink argue that Old and Middle Comedy overlapped, while Sidwell, 247–258, in Harvey and Wilkins sees "old" and "new" comedy operating in parallel. See also Slater, 2002, 239 on the change in the genres: "Tragedy became classicized, distant in style and moral assumptions as well as narrative and characters from the world of contemporary experience. With it faded comedy's capacity for direct challenge to tragedy's assumptions."

155 For Euripides as a source of New Comedy see Satyrus' *Life of Euripides* and for Aristophanic parody of Euripides as a source, Nesslerath, 1993, with a good account of the evidence; W.G. Arnott, 1972, 73 points to Middle Comedy titles identical to those of Euripides, although these may be parodies. See also Sidwell, 255–256 in Harvey and Wilkins; Dover 1987, 216–218; Bain, 1977, 148–149 and, opposed, Porter in Mastonarde, 1999–2000.

phanes attacks in Euripides are found in his own drama as well.[156] Like Euripides, Aristophanes loves to play with the artificiality of the stage, the arbitrary nature of human *nomos*, and the hypocrisy and self-interest that underlie most assertions of duty or principle. His plays address the grand myths of the past only to debunk them. His concern is not with the universal, but with the here and now. And, of course, like Euripides, Aristophanes peoples his drama with slaves, women, beggars, and the everyday folk of Athens.[157] His heroes regularly make the worse argument appear the stronger, defy and mock all authority, human or divine, and speak not in grand tragic phrases but in the language of the street.[158] In short, nearly every poetic idiosyncrasy that Aristophanes makes fun of in Euripides is one that he is guilty of himself.

Nor is Aristophanes uncomfortable with the paradox. In *Women at the Thesmophoria*, for example, the whole initial joke is the condemnation of Euripides for presenting women in exactly the way that Aristophanes is, at the moment, engaged in presenting them. In the *Frogs*, where Aristophanes champions Aeschylus over Euripides, his ridicule of Aeschylus' bombastic "traditional" tragedy is no less savage than his ridicule of Euripides for undermining the tradition. In the *Clouds*, Aristophanes attacks Euripides, alongside Socrates, for questioning conventions that he has just had the Weaker Logos entirely dis-

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156 Roselli, 2005; Henderson 1996, 25: "Aristophanes and Euripides were in fact the dramatists most acutely aware of the ambivalence, contradictions, and tensions inherent in the Athenian social and political system, and they constantly explored them … Aristophanes' criticism of Euripides' daring portrayals (particularly in *Acharnians*, *Women at the Thesmophoria*, and *Frogs*) is to a degree disingenuous, for he is usually "guilty" of the same charges himself"; Hewitt, 1917, 176 for an earlier view: "How could one who attacked Sophocles and Euripides for their views about the gods permit himself to portray the divinities in such ridiculous and despicable guise?"; Platter, 2006, 151–153; Blondell et al. 1999, 69–80; Murphy, 1938.

157 Henderson in Harvey and Wilkins, 137 posits that Old Comedy brought scandalous women onstage because Euripides had. Hall, 2010, 116 points out that in contrast to comedy "in tragedy almost all 'lower-class' people are actually slaves."

158 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1404b on Euripides' shift to ordinary language; *Poetics* 1460b32 on Sophocles' claim that he drew men as they ought to be, Euripides as they were. Michelini's description (1987, 127) could be of Aristophanes: "The typical Euripidean suffering and striving protagonist is often a hard-up low life (a woman, oldster, barbarian, or beggar) whose attempts to maintain the claims of the ego in heroic terms continually shatter against social barriers"; Dearden, 1976, 73–74 on Aristophanes' use of the *ekkekluma*, which he ridicules in Euripides; Fletcher, 2003 and 2012, 123 on Euripides' experiments with perjury.

credit, underlining the fact by using the *parabasis* to describe himself and those who appreciate him as *sophos* (520, 522, 526, 535), the word he has just been beating Socrates over the head with.

This peculiarity has created an impasse among scholars. Some commentators, noting Aristophanes' continual mockery of Euripides, Socrates, and the new sophistic movement, have concluded that Aristophanes' basic stand is conservative and bitterly opposed to the "new ways" that Euripides stands for.[159] Others point out that, as in Cratinus' comic coinage, "the Euripidaristophanizer," Aristophanes' own plays are rather similar to Euripides'.[160] From this point of view, Aristophanes himself appears to belong to the new set, and his criticism of Euripides, and perhaps of Socrates as well, seems simply the joshing of friends.[161]

The difficulty stems from what seems to be an insoluble problem: how can even a comic poet attack precisely the kind of play that he himself composes? In fact, however, the trouble arises only when one disregards the boundaries between comedy and tragedy. When they are seen as opposite genres, it becomes clear that the dilemma is illusory. Aristophanes can disapprove of Euripides and still write the same kind of drama because he is a comic poet. The problem with Euripides doing the same thing is that his job is to present not comedy but tragedy.[162]

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159 As Dover, *Frogs*, 69: "The recurrent political theme of the play is a familiar one: old ways good, new ways bad. The heroic ideals of Aeschylean tragedy will preserve the city, the unsettling realism of Euripidean tragedy will subvert it." See also Wycherley, 1946 and Sandbach, 1977, 30–42 who see this view as typical; Norwood, 1948, 311 ff.; Padilla, 1992; Rau, 1967, 34–36; Friedrich, 1980, 14–23, who, however, sees Aristophanes as ambivalent. L.C. Edwards, 1990 resolves the difficulty by seeing Aristophanes as using Euripides' methods, but for a moral purpose, and see n. 1 for further references.

160 More specifically, a *kompsos, hypoleptologos, gnomidiotes* (refined, super-subtle, composer of little maxims) Euripidaristophanizer (342); Aristophanes is said to have replied (tongue in cheek) that he used Euripides' elegance without his vulgarity (*Women Claiming Tent Sites* 488; Scholiast, Plato *Apol.* 19c; Rusten, 2011, 276, where also *On Comedy* on Aristophanes' "emulation of Euripides"). For Aristophanes' admiration see Murray, 1933, 117; Dobrov, 2001, 102–103; Bobrick in Dobrov 193; and as sympathetic, Lowe, 2008, 59–60; Silk, 2000, 52: "contrary to many modern misstatements, Aristophanes is never hostile to Euripides *tout court*, but is content to seem ambivalent about the great tragedian's experiments" and see 322–334, although in Pelling, 1990, 161–162, Aristophanes is said to view Euripides' as a lower form of tragedy.

161 On Aristophanes and Socrates see Nussbaum, 1980, 46–48.

162 Gredley in Silk, 213; Rosenmeyer, 1955, 241. Bowie, 1993, 217–227 and E. Segal in Griffiths also see Aristophanes as angry at Euripides' encroachment.

The problem and its solution appear in small in the *Frogs*, where Aristophanes presents Aeschylus and not Euripides (despite Dionysus' predilection) as a paradigm for tragedy. The choice should be paradoxical. Had Aristophanes' aim been to champion (as his comedies usually do) individual self-assertion over communal values, peace over war, and human self-determination over the divine, it should have been Euripides that Dionysus brought back from the grave. Logically speaking, Aeschylus' victory would seem to indicate some doubt in Aristophanes about his own view of the human condition.[163] It has not been thought to do so, and for exactly the right reason: because the kind of drama appropriate to Aeschylus is simply different from the kind that is appropriate to Aristophanes.

We cannot know to what extent Aristophanes' ridicule of Euripides reflected his actual opinion. There is, however, certainly one personal edge to the criticism. Since his concern was not the necessity of eternal truths, but the delusions and contradictions of ordinary human life, the setting of traditional tragedy was perfect for Aristophanes' comedy. Short of the Marx Brothers being assigned to follow ten paces behind the President, it is hard to imagine a more favorable position. By writing tragicomedy rather than tragedy, Euripides left his comic counterpart a good deal less to play against. A fantasy of human freedom is far more powerful when played out against the background of the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, for example, than against the *Helen*. An exposure of the bombast of heroism is more effective when set against the *Seven Against Thebes* than the *Orestes*. An Aristophanes play performed after more "standard" tragedy not only brings out what is most serious in tragedy, it also emphasizes what is most important in comedy.

In championing Aeschylus in the *Frogs* or ridiculing Euripides, Aristophanes does not show us that he doubts his own perspective, but rather that his own, comic perspective is not the proper one for tragedy. This is problematic only because we expect anyone with a particular point of view to also, and consequently, disagree with its opposite. There is, however, another possible approach, captured by Heraclitus: "They do not understand how differing it agrees with itself; there is a back-bent connection, as of the bow or the lyre" (DK 51).[164] Plato has the doctor Eryximachus quote this in the *Symposium*

163 Hubbard, 1986, 191–194 takes the claims of the *parabases* in this way. L.C. Edwards, 1990, who takes Aristophanes' claims for his own poetry at face value, also sees this as a self-contradiction. For a broader view see Friedrich, 1980, 5–36, and, in contrast, Seidensticker, 1982, 209.

164 From which Seidensticker, 1982, takes his title: *Palintonos Harmonia, Studien zu komischen Elementen in der griechischen Tragödie*.

(187a5), and while Eryximachus dismisses the claim that things that disagree could be in concord as “a great absurdity” (*polle alogia*), Socrates’ final claim that the same man could write both tragedy and comedy (223d1) might display a little more sympathy for the view.

As we will see throughout, the ambivalence that characterizes Aristophanes’ comedy allows him to see human beings as fundamentally individualistic and as fundamentally social, as the creators of our own essentially arbitrary values, and as molded by them. This view, in a sense, is a microcosm of the dramatic festival as a whole, where the audience, at least in Aristophanes’ view, should emerge both with an appreciation of the higher values of tradition and with a sense of their absurdity, recognizing the fundamental necessity that binds in human life, and acknowledging the human as free to create itself. One is the view of tragedy, the other that of comedy. In the festival, at least as Aristophanes seems to have seen it, both were equally true, opposite though they were.

CHAPTER 2

Satyr Drama and the *Cyclops*: Where Tragedy and Comedy Meet

> A man walks into the confession box and says to the priest, "I'm eighty years old, and I just had sex with two eighteen-year-old girls—at the same time." The priest says, "That's terrible. How long has it been since your last confession?" "Confession?" says the man. "I don't go to confession. I'm Jewish." "So why are you telling me?" says the priest. "Why tell you?" says the man. "Why not? I'm telling everyone!"

1 Comic Satyrs/Tragic Tales

As its pervasive interest in tragic parody indicates, Athenian comedy set itself against tragedy. What is less often remarked on is that Athenian tragedy also set itself against a contrasting comic view of its world. From the beginning of the fifth century until well into the fourth, a tragic poet writing for the City Dionysia ended his trilogy with its comic antithesis, the satyr play, a genre whose chorus of satyrs had values as different from tragedy as those of the eighty-year-old and the priest above.[1]

Satyr drama both ended the tragic trilogy with comedy and consisted itself, essentially, of a juxtaposition of the comic and the tragic. The comedy came from the satyrs and their "father" and leader, Silenus or Papposilenus.[2] The

1 The dominance of the City Dionysia ensured the importance of the connection, although tragedy was also presented without satyr drama at the Lenaia (*I.G.* ii2. 2319; Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 41, 109; and see the Conclusion). A similar contrast was popular on vases juxtaposing satyrs and heroes and satyrs masquerading as heroes, as in the depiction of a satyr as Jason taking the Golden Fleece (Bieber, fig. 42) as D. Walsh, 2009, 238; Lissarrague in Winkler and Zeitlin, 232–233 and pl. 16.

2 On "satyr" and "silen" (whence "Silenus") of the same creatures see Hedreen 1992, 1, 161–164. Whether the Silenus figure served as chorus leader or actor remains a question. Sutton, 1974b, as Seaford, *Cyclops*, 4, argues for a certain fluidity, suggesting, interestingly, that

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tragedy came from the world that the satyrs had entered into, which employed the same mythic setting and themes as tragedy, and which left the tragic elements of the drama largely intact, complete with tragic masks and costume, tragic action, and tragic diction.[3] And since the humor, like that of *Bud Abbott and Lou Costello Meet Frankenstein*, seems to have come from the inability of the serious elements to curb the satyrs' comic responses, there would be an incentive to make the contrast between tragedy and comedy as extreme as possible.[4]

That this contrast was the main point of satyr drama is also clear from outside sources. In the *Symposium*, for example, Alcibiades describes Socrates as a union of the most serious with the most absurd, a pug-nosed, ironic, playful creature, talking absurdly of low-life tradesmen, but who also contains golden forms of wonderful beauty. The description, which foreshadows the idea that the same man should be able to write both tragedy and comedy, is summed up by Alcibiades' calling Socrates a Silenus, and his serious absurdity a satyr play (*Symp*. 215a–215e).[5] Later testimony is equally explicit. Just as Demetrius likened satyr drama to "playful tragedy," Horace pointed out that one should not make tragedy behave like a matron forced to dance

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Silenus worked between actor and chorus just as satyr drama worked between tragedy and comedy.

3 Taplin in Easterling, 1997, 73 points out that that the satyr masks and costumes on the Pronomos vase are like those of tragedy, as also Sutton, 1980a, 145; Walton, 1980, 158. See Griffith in Harrison, 161–172 and in Revermann and Wilson, 74 on satyr drama's link to tragedy, particularly in tragic diction; Seaford, *Cyclops*, 44–48 on Odysseus' and Polyphemus' tragic meter and diction and *contra*, Seidensticker in Krumeich et al., 33; Sutton, 1980a, 160: "A reader of *Cyclops* might well wonder why Odysseus is treated with so much respect and not given a humorous characterization, as in other comic literature. An explanation is not difficult to discover: the essential comedy of the satyr drama depends on a tension between the heroic and satyric elements, and if Euripides were to make Odysseus a figure of fun, he might gain a momentary advantage, but only at the cost of collapsing the incongruity that lies at the heart of satyric humor." For an excellent overall summary see O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*.

4 Reckford, 1987, 105 suggests Abbott and Costello although he sees satyr play as more like fairy tale (105–108); Sutton, 1980a, 137, who sees the plays as introducing satyrs into "a mythological situation where, properly speaking, they had no business" suggests the Marx Brothers (159–162). See also Simon, 1982, 18 on the "Pronomos" vase: "The particular charm of this type of drama lay precisely in the artfully motivated meeting of gods and heroes from the tragic sphere with the altogether different world of the satyrs, who here always formed the chorus"; Seidensticker in Csapo and Miller, 2003, 118 points to the "clash of two totally different worlds." For the role, overall, of satyr drama as between tragedy and comedy see Seaford, Cyclops, 28–29; Seidensticker in Krumeich et al., 32–34; Voelke, 2001.

5 As also in Socrates' response to "this satyr and silenic drama of yours" (222d).

among satyrs; it is the role of satyr drama, not of tragedy, to introduce comedy into the tragic (*Ars Poetica*, 231–233).

Until quite recently, however, scholars have tended to disregard satyr drama as an aspect of tragedy.[6] This is understandable, since an equal disinterest on the part of ancient commentators means that no tragic trilogy complete with satyr play survives, and only one complete satyr play, Euripides' *Cyclops*, is extant, itself preserved by accident. Nonetheless, it seems impossible to appreciate the relation of tragedy and comedy, or even Greek tragedy alone, without taking satyr drama into account. The *Oresteia*, after all, ended not with the *Eumenides*, but with a satyr play, tails, phalluses, drunkenness, and all (Aeschylus, in fact, was celebrated for his satyr drama), as did the trilogies that contained the *Ajax*, the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, and the *Medea*.[7] Nor can we dismiss satyr drama, as has often been done, as merely comic relief.[8] As in Sutton's

6 Excepting Scodel, 1980 and Easterling in Easterling 1997, 36–53. Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, for example, like Aristotle, treats satyr drama almost entirely in connection with the *Poetics*' claim that tragedy derives from the satyric, For considerations of satyr drama see Seaford, *Cyclops*; Sutton, 1980a; Sutton in Easterling and Knox, 94–102; Brommer, 1959 and 1983; Seidensticker, 1989; and Krumeich et al., 1999 and 643–660, for a bibliography. Lissarrague is particularly valuable, although not necessarily in relation to tragedy, as in Winkler and Zeitlin and in Carpenter and Faraone and see Hedreen, 1992 and in Csapo and Miller, 2007. More recently see also Griffith, 2002; Hall, 1998; Harrison ed., 2001, and Tony Harrison's version of Sophocles' satyr play, the *Trackers* (1990) performed at Delphi in 1988. For the neglect see Seaford, *Cyclops*, 1; Sutton, 1980a, 95; Griffith in Harrison, 161–162. In contrast, the connection was assumed in the 5th century, as in Ion of Chios' comment that excellence, like tragic drama, should include the satyric (Plutarch, *Pericles* 5.4).

7 For the excellence of Aeschylus and Pratinas in regard to satyr drama, Pausanias II, 13.6; Diogenes Laertius II, 133 and for a very unusual vase depicting Aeschylean tragedy and satyr drama (dated after 454), Robinson, 1932.

8 For this common view, beginning with Horace (*Ars Poetica*, 220–224), see Else, 1965, 25; Voelke, 2001; Sutton in Easterling and Knox, 95: "To a large extent, therefore, the humour of satyr plays consists of poking fun at tragedy, in order of course to provide comic relief." Sutton (1980a, 164–173) also describes it as a sop for the groundlings and Nagy, 1990, 391 as "a subordinated attachment of tragedy." For contrary arguments, Seaford, *Cyclops*, 26–29; Seidensticker in Krumeich et al., who sees rather a contrast in worldviews. Despite little evidence for family and marriage in the plays, Griffith, 2002, 233 sees satyr drama as "a reassuring picture of erotic and / or marital bliss and familial restoration," which seems "comic relief" in a social guise. Goldhill, 1986, 78, in contrast, sees transgressive relief: "After the tragedies, the satyr play offered the immediate explosive gratification of buffoonery and ribaldry which led to the afternoon's comedy. There too, in humor the city approached itself through transgression." In contrast Easterling in Easterling 1997 38 sees satyr drama as the culmination of the work.

claim that the satyrs "give an aura of unreality to an otherwise distressing situation, thereby signaling to the audience that Odysseus' predicament need not be taken over-seriously," "comic relief" only returns us to the assumption that what is "not serious" in the sense of occasioning laughter is also "not serious" in the sense of being trivial.[9] We cannot, however, assume that because the audience enjoyed laughing after the tragic trilogy, that laughter signified nothing important.

The satyrs, with their sexual aggression, drunkenness, masculine self-assertion, and utter disregard of propriety, mark a deliberate antithesis to tragedy, as well as to civic values in general.[10] As has increasingly been seen, this impossible behavior, very far from being a reason to dismiss the satyrs, is an important clue that they need to be taken account of.[11] This is also true of the themes of satyr drama, which seem to both recall and to answer the tragic trilogy that preceded.[12]

Finally, satyr drama balances itself against tragedy through an aspect that has gone largely unobserved, a tendency in connected tetralogies to have the satyr drama return to the beginning of the trilogy's story. The break in chronology that occurs, for example, between the *Seven Against Thebes*, the end of

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9 Sutton in Easterling and Knox, 95. This argument, made in the introduction, bears repeating.

10 Hall, 1998, reprinted in Hall, 2006, 142–149; Slater in Harrison, 95–96 for a similar contrast in the *Alcestis*; Lissarrague in Winkler and Zeitlin for satyrs as paradigmatically anti-civic; and Padgett in Cohen, 2000 and Stewart, 1997, 189–191 for the inversion of social rules finally reaffirming them; as Gibert, 2002; Griffith in Harrison, 196 n. 74. Against Hall's extreme position see Voelke, 2001; O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 26–27 and Shaw, 2014, 73–75 on satyr sexuality generally. Hall, as Griffith points out, has an excessively either / or position. As Lissarrague implies, transgression is attractive; sometimes we approve because we disapprove.

11 In contrast Griffith, 2002, 225 ff. and in Harrison, minimizes the satyrs as "disarmingly innocent and naïve" with their "chaotic enthusiasm and irresponsible hijinks" and "childish, or coltish, body language" (216, 224) and in Harrison, 174 as a "dependent-inferior chorus of semi-human creatures who behave like so many irresponsible children or useless slaves" (also taking *Poetics* 1449a19–21 as describing the satyrs, rather than the plots, as "small," 194 n. 60). Osborne in Goldhill and Osborne, 1994, 52–56, who sees the satyrs (unlike the Centaurs, and like the comic hero) as essentially individualistic, seems more accurate.

12 Sutton, 1980a, 158–166 and see Seaford, *Cyclops*, 21–26 for the thematic connection to tragedy. Had the aim been merely to raise a laugh, there is easier material than cannibalism or funerary rites, as Seaford, *Cyclops*, 37–38 and 1980, 29. In this light the film "Life is Beautiful," in which comedy confronts a tragedy that is only too real (as Doniger, 2002) is a better example than the Marx Brothers.

Aeschylus' Oedipus trilogy, and its satyr play, the *Sphinx*, works against any inclination in the audience to see the satyr drama as summing up or negating the trilogy. Rather, by returning to an earlier point in the myth, Aeschylus allows his satyrs a response to necessity that, in Seidensticker's words, creates a "mutual intensification" of the genres' emotional impact.[13]

The satyrs' particular connection to Dionysus, himself the paradigmatic god of contradictions, may have enabled satyr drama to maintain its own peculiar form. The replacement of "padded dancers" by satyrs on mid-fifth-century vases points to an early association of satyrs with comedy, while the introduction of satyr-drama into the City Dionysia placed it within the realm of tragedy, where it might also easily have been absorbed. That it was not may be due to the fact that satyrs maintained an independent identity as companions of Dionysus both in the Anthesteria and as icons of the symposium.[14] Alongside maenads and Dionysus, satyrs were a natural subject for the countless symposium vases, mixing bowls, and wine cups that played a central role in the life of an adult Athenian male. From the sixth century alone, well before the introduction of satyr drama into the City Dionysia, more than eight hundred depictions of Dionysus and satyrs survive on Attic black-figure vases, along with another five hundred of satyrs and maenads dancing, as well as depictions of satyrs and Dionysus in stock situations such as with Ariadne or the returning Hephaestus.[15] The result was an important and firmly established connection of satyrs with Dionysus, reinforcing their interest in drunkenness and sex, and independent of their connection to comedy or their place in tragic drama.

And while vases reinforced the connection of satyrs to Dionysus, they also reinforced the genre's particular juxtaposition of comedy and tragedy. Near the beginning of the fifth century, and alongside the more traditional depictions of satyrs and Dionysus, vases began to show satyrs in places they have no business to be, such as doing a pyrrhic dance, or building a throne, a change that seems to reflect the introduction of satyr drama into the City Dionysia. Fifth-century vases continue to play with the discrepancy, showing satyrs with the Sphinx, for example, or with Medea's caldron, or dancing around Heracles.[16] These

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13 Seidensticker in Gregory, 2005, 54 n. 4 and see also 48–49.

14 For the Anthesteria see Parke, 1977, 107–124; Seaford, *Cyclops*, 7–8.

15 Vases with Dionysus are among over three thousand archaic vases depicting satyrs (Hedreen, 1992, 2–4). See Osborne in Pelling, 1997, 187–212 discussing the relation to real life maenads, for an interesting and related history of maenad images.

16 The relation to satyr drama is argued by Jahn, 1868; Buschor, 1943; E. Simon in Kurz and Sparkes; Brommer, 1959, 2–14; J.R. Green, 1994, 39; Csapo and Slater, 2002, 53 ff. Hedreen, 1992 and in Csapo and Miller, 2007 sees a dramatic basis even for satyrs performing

juxtapositions of tragic myth with the fecklessness of the satyrs, as the vases were designed to appeal to popular taste, serve as an invaluable indication of how satyrs were ordinarily perceived.

The most striking feature of the new satyr vases is the difference between the satyrs and the "serious" figures alongside them.[17] Unlike tragic heroes, satyrs are phallic, come in bunches, and jump around a lot. On vases they are portrayed in groups, while onstage they are the chorus.[18] In contrast, the "serious" figures on vases are stately and often solitary, as on the fifth-century vase that depicts satyrs dancing around a poised, robed, and somewhat puzzled-looking Prometheus, or on an Italian vase where a controlled Odysseus directs the blinding of the Cyclops while satyrs cavort behind him.[19] This "busyness" of the satyrs, characteristic of comedy,[20] appears also in the *sikinnis*, a dance done specifically by satyrs in satyr drama, and in the motif, apparent in the satyr drama that survives, of satyrs doing elaborate gymnastics before the astonished eyes of characters such as Odysseus (*Cyclops* 99–100) or the nymph Cyllene (*Trackers* 213–234).[21]

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ordinary tasks. Lissarrague is more skeptical, in Winkler and Zeitlin and in Carpenter and Faraone, 217 n. 44; Krumeich in Krumeich et al., 41–73 points to other factors. Webster, 1950; Gibert, 2002; O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 23–25 summarize. For the vases, J.R. Green, 1994, 42; Bieber, 1961, 6–7; Hedreen, 1992, 109–111 and for the association with satyr drama, 115–117. For the Sphinx, J.R. Green 1994, 40; Prometheus, Bieber, 1961, 10, 13; Seaford, *Cyclops*, 2–3 with plates; Brommer, 1959, 41–43; Krumeich et al. 6b; Trendall and Webster, 31; Beazley, 1939; Medea, Brommer, 1959, 38; Webster, 1950, 86; Heracles and Atlas' load, Bieber fig. 43, p. 14; Trendall and Webster, 1971, 38; and for Heracles with lion-skin, Hedreen pl. 35 a–d.

17 In accord with Lissarrague's now canonical: "The recipe is as follows: take one myth, add satyrs, observe the result" (in Winkler and Zeitlin, 236).

18 As Lissarrague, 1990, 54: "silenoi are, above all, a group." For vases see those above as well as the numerous attacks upon Iris, as Brommer, 1959, 23–24; Sutton, 1980a, 71; Green and Handley, 27; Bieber fig. 48, p. 15. For other cavorting satyrs see Hedreen pl. 16 a–b, MFA 01.8052, pl. 19, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 47 (GR 26.1864). See also Seidensticker in Csapo and Miller, 2003, 110–117; Krumeich et al. 21–22; Lissarrague in Winkler and Zeitlin, 234 and in Carpenter and Faraone, 212 for the satyrs' "perpetual motion." On later vases, as satyrs become more domesticated (presumably under the influence of satyr drama) they begin to appear individually, as Brommer, 1959, 50–64. For a striking visual juxtaposition of satyrs and tragedy see Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, 175–179.

19 For the Cyclops vase, Green and Handley, 28–29; Brommer, 1959, 15–18; Bieber, 1961, 10, fig. 30.

20 Revermann, 2006, 3–7 and *passim*.

21 See Seaford, *Cyclops*, 103–104; Séchan, 1930.

But while both satyr drama and vases set the satyrs against the serious protagonists of myth, the satyrs are not simply comic, either. They overlap with the world of comedy in that they are idle, mischievous braggarts, cowardly in the face of danger, and utterly bound to the physical.[22] Their appearance on vases is similar: involved with sex and drink, backing off from the gods who defend Hera from rape, contemplating the Sphinx without any suggestion of acting.[23] However, they are also, like the serious figures on the vases, completely without the grotesque masks and padding that characterize comedy. In this way they are very unlike, for example, the figures on Italian vases, where the myth is inverted and the figures are marked by comic masks and padding, as when a decrepit Zeus, his ladder over his head, looks exhaustedly at the distance up to Alcmene's bedchamber. In satyr drama there is no such inversion of myth and, correspondingly, no comic "ugliness."[24] It is rather the undistorted nature of the satyrs themselves, and the impossibility of reconciling that nature with the serious world of tragedy, that provides the humor.

Another element of the iconography of satyr vases confirms that popular perception distinguished satyrs as neither comic nor tragic, simply. As we have seen, tragedy on Greek vases is depicted as "real," while comedy is shown with its theatrical elements evident. Satyrs, in contrast, can appear either way, as "real" satyrs with no apparent theatrical elements (including on vases that seem to depict satyr drama), or with their costume, fuzzy shorts with attached tail and phallus, clearly demarcated.[25] This intermediate position also appears on a number of fifth-century vases that depict satyrs with a "real"

22 For the contrasting motif of the "wise satyr" see Sheffield, 2001; Usher, 2002; O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 17–22.

23 For the Sphinx vase (Würzburg, loan of Tokyo, coll. Fujito, dated 467) J.R. Green, 1994, 40; Hedreen, 1992 116; Brommer, 1959, 38, figs. 36 / 37 (also on the cover of Easterling and Knox, 1989) and Bieber, 1961, 12, fig. 37 for a similar vase. For others, Green and Handley, 26–29; Bieber, 6–16; J.R. Green, 1994, 40–45, Trendall and Webster 36–38; Krumeich et al. 16a and b.

24 As D. Walsh, 2009, 250–251 the satyrs on Attic vases combine "fine bodies which move with athleticism and grace" and grotesque "bearded animalistic faces" and phalluses. For Zeus and Alcmene Bieber, 1961, 132, fig. 484; Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, plates 106–107; the cover of Reverman (ed.), 2014 and see Chapter One on comic masks and costume.

25 J.R. Green, 1991, 15–50 and 1994, 39: "Satyr plays therefore straddled the serious and the comic, and it is interesting to see that over the fifth century as a whole the audience reaction as we see it in representations on vases is in parallel with the reactions to comedy and tragedy. The representations divide themselves fairly neatly into what one could call the literal and the interpretive, and so use both the conventions for representing comedy and those for tragedy." Lissarrague in Winkler and Zeitlin, 231, however, points out that only 20 examples of the 300 in Brommer (Brommer, 1959, 10–15) show satyrs in breeches.

satyr's head, that is, with no indication of a mask, but dressed in the actor's hairy shorts. Similarly, on the Pronomos vase, which primarily depicts actors in satyr shorts holding their masks, the one actor wearing his mask is dancing and appears to have a "real" satyr's head.[26] The distinction is even more noted when we compare different vases: on a number of vases where serious figures are depicted, in tragic fashion, as "real," the satyrs who accompany them wear shorts,[27] while on vases where satyrs are juxtaposed with comic figures, whose iconography includes padding, phalluses, and gaping mouths, it is the satyrs who are depicted as "real."[28]

Just as tragedy helped define satyr drama, so also satyr drama may have helped define tragedy.[29] The interrelation is illustrated on a few fifth-century Athenian cups that depict a satyr, in all his traditional lewdness, creeping up on a sleeping maenad—here labeled "Tragodia."[30] In this light it seems

26 For the Pronomos vase and MFA 98.883, Chapter One n. 65, where two tragic actors dress as women, the one with his mask on appearing as an actual woman, see Csapo and Slater, Plate 7B; Green in McDonald and Walton, 173; Winkler and Zeitlin, pl. 3; Gould in Easterling and Knox, 24–25.

27 As the "Return of Hephaistus" vase of 470–60, Vienna IV 985; J.R. Green, 1994, 43–45; Hedreen, 1992, 114–115, who points to a nearly identical scene without the shorts. Similarly (as Beazley, 1955), on the Pronomos vase Dionysus and Ariadne appear as "real" (as on the reverse, Hedreen in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 176–177; Griffith in Taplin and Wyles). Lissarrague in Taplin and Wyles, 34 shows the juxtaposition of the sides, with a satyr in shorts from side A abutting a "wild" satyr from side B.

28 As the black figure amphora, Berlin F 1697, of a piper and chorus of men astride other men dressed as horses, with a reverse side, less often depicted, of satyrs as "real" men-horses and a satyr piper complete with "actual" horse's legs (Hedreen, 1992, 136–138, plates 39a–b; Hedreen in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 160–163; J.R. Green, 1994, 28). Rusten, 2006, 47 n. 38 suggests that this "may indicate a complementary genre of performance." See also Hedreen in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 164–165 for a similar satyr with horses' legs and a Tarentine vase of the early 4th century (Cleveland, 89.73) which contrasts padded and phallic comic actors on one side with "real" satyrs on the other (J.R. Green, 1994, 86–87).

29 See Seaford, *Cyclops*, 4–5 and Adrados, 1975, 32 for the "mutual polarization" of the genres: "While the chorus of satyrs is burlesque, licentious, afflicted with every weakness, cowardly, like the monster or tyrant who enslaves them, tragedy inversely tends to be purged of all these traits" and 353–365 for the similar polarization of comedy and tragedy. For a contrast of comic, tragic and satyric heroes see Jouan in Thiercy.

30 Seaford, *Cyclops*, 54 pl. 4. Hannah Hintze points out to me that the vase displays tragedy withstanding the attack by withdrawing rather than fighting back—a successful strategy, as satyrs never get their maenads (Plutarch, *Virtues of Women* 13.249e–f; Lissarrague, 1990, 63). On a similar cup "Tragoidia" is dressing and the satyr is named "Kissos" or "Ivy" (Marshall, 2000, 229) and see Lissarrague in Carpenter and Faraone, 217 for a young

significant that as Euripides moved outside of the traditional boundaries of tragedy, he also experimented with satyr drama. As we will see in examining the *Cyclops*, just as the introduction of satyr drama may have influenced the development of tragedy, so also Euripides' innovations in tragedy may have created a corresponding change in satyr drama.

Like the contrast of comedy and tragedy, the relation of tragedy and the satyr play was specific to fifth-century Athens, and, again like that contrast, it would prove temporary. On the one hand, prosatyric plays like the *Alcestis*, which removed the satyrs from the fourth play in the tetralogy, may have undermined their role in the festival. On the other, satyr drama seems to have begun to free itself from tragedy.[31] Toward the end of the fifth century, the vase painters' interest in depicting satyrs in tragic situations appears to fade, and vases tend to depict instead the satyric actors themselves, as on the well-known Pronomos vase. This is also the period that sees the beginnings of Middle Comedy and the *floruit* of Euripides' "romances," notably *Iphigenia among the Taurians* in 416, the *Helen* of 412, and the *Orestes* of 408. Fifty years later the sequence of three tragedies and a satyr play had been replaced by a single satyr play that preceded the entire tragic competition (*IG* ii^2 22.2320). Meanwhile, at least on Italian vases of the fourth century, satyrs, and Silenus in particular, had become fat and hairy, resembling the characters of comedy.[32] By 254, tragedy, comedy, and satyr drama were being treated as three separate genres, with a competition held for the best actor in each.[33] Finally, in 160 C.E., in Boeotia, the separation of genres had disappeared altogether and we have a record of the same man, L. Marius Antiochus, as a "poet of new comedy," "actor of new tragedy," and "writer of satyr play."[34]

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satyr labeled "Komos" drinking while a nymph labeled "Tragoidia" looks on. Harrison, 46 follows suit in his *Trackers* with the stage direction "(Exit tragedy pursued by a SATYR)".

31 Seaford, *Cyclops*, 21: "the very fragmentary evidence allows us to detect a gradual change, in which satyric drama separated itself from tragedy" and see 10–26 for satyr drama's gradual assimilation to comedy and 189–190 for prosatyric drama. For a sensitive study of the *Alcestis* in these terms see R.G.A. Buxton, in Mossman, 2003, esp. 184–186 and for late satyr drama blending tragedy and comedy, Sutton, 1987c.

32 See Webster, 1970, 59 for the difference between fat and hairy comic satyrs and the smooth, athletic satyrs of satyr drama, as well as Hall, 1998; Foley, 2003; J.R. Green, 1994, 90–91. Silenus reappears in his comic form c. 325 at a symposium, drunk under the couch, as Trendall and Webster, 122–123; J.R. Green, 1994, 98; Bieber, 1961, fig. D = fig. 538 and Dearden in Betts et al., 38.

33 Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 124–125; Csapo and Slater, 42.

34 Csapo and Slater, 192.

In other words, as the opposition between comedy and tragedy faded, so did the opposition of tragedy and satyr play. And as this happened, the importance of satyr drama became less and less evident to those interested in drama. As early a commentator as Aristotle, who describes the origin of tragedy as satyric (*Poetics* 4.1449a9–24), examines tragedy completely without reference to satyr drama.[35] The neglect, which can be traced as well in the scholia to our present editions of tragedy, continues down to the present.

With that neglect, however, a great deal has been lost. Satyr drama was not merely a matter of phalluses and fuzzy shorts. It was rather a unique form of drama designed to juxtapose tragedy and comedy as starkly as possible, both internally, in the relation of satyrs to serious characters, and externally, in forming the conclusion to a tragic trilogy. Like the first four acts of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, the tetralogy, like the satyr play itself, kept its tragic and comic elements in the starkest possible relief. Unlike the final act of *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare's other romances, or Euripides' "tragicomedies," the two elements were not meant to be reconciled.[36] It is because of this that the opposition would end up serving as well as a model for the relation of comedy and tragedy.

Satyr drama has often been described as a "bridge" between comedy and tragedy.[37] Although the description is telling, it is important to remember that satyr drama came first. Satyr drama's relation to tragedy was not derived from any original idea of an opposition of comedy and tragedy, but rather served as a model for it. Nor are the two kinds of opposition identical, for a number of reasons. In the first place, the fixed, apolitical nature of the satyrs and the given fact of their servitude to Dionysus did not allow satyr drama as wide a range as comedy. In the second, the same man *did* write both tragedy and satyr drama. As a result, a tragic poet could use the satyr play to reflect the specific themes, story, and even characters of a tragic trilogy. In contrast, the comic poet knew that his play would be produced alongside a tragedy, but not what tragedy that would be. As a result, while a playwright could create specific

35 Otherwise satyr drama is mentioned only in the fragments on comedy, and there only as an initial division of "mimetic poetry," as Janko, 1987, 23. Significantly as well, Aristotle, despite his consuming interest in the form and "wholeness" of drama, makes no reference to either the trilogy or tetralogy form.

36 Interestingly, the fifth act of *A Winter's Tale*, like the *Tempest*, focuses on the miraculous, the recovery of what is lost, and reconciliation, particularly in the form of marriage, and in this way rather resembles Menander, or some later Euripides.

37 See, for example, J.R. Green, 1994, 39.

oppositions between tragedy and satyr drama, the oppositions that emerged between tragedy and comedy could only be general.[38] They are, however, as we will see in the following chapters, the kind of general oppositions that can give rise to a genre.

2 Satyr Play: *Net-Draggers*, *Festival-Goers*, *Trackers*[39]

Although evidence remains sparse, recent work has greatly enhanced our understanding of satyr plays, suggesting a close and dynamic relation between tragedy, comedy, and satyr drama, within which various generic oppositions played a critical role. We will consider one of these contrasts at the end of this section in examining the genres' views of the *polis* and its relation to the individual. But there is also evidence that individual tragedians deliberately balanced the opposed views of tragedy and satyr drama, so that neither would be seen as simply outweighing the other. This is the case with the technique we look at here, where a playwright has the satyr play return to the beginning of a connected myth in order to prevent the satyr drama from having simply "the last word" in the tetralogy. The technique seems to have been characteristic of Aeschylus in particular, but since Aeschylus was active between 470 and 458, the time when tragedy and comedy were also establishing their relationship, and since he was deeply influential as a playwright, his treatment of the relation of satyr drama and tragedy was bound to be formative in the ever-developing relationship of the genres.

2.1 *Back to the Beginning: The Tragic Tetralogy*

While the contrast between satyrs and serious figures, and between satyr drama and tragedy overall, is clear, the question of how specific trilogies were related to their satyr plays is not. The problem is lack of evidence. We have no complete tetralogy, while of the satyr drama we have, only in the case of Aeschylus'

38 Bakola, 2010, 151–152 points, for example, to Cratinus' interest in the generic aspects of satyr drama, rather than in specific plays.

39 For texts see Lloyd-Jones in Smyth and Lloyd-Jones, *Aeschylus*; Lloyd-Jones, *Sophocles: Fragments* and O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*. See also Werre-de Haas, 1961 and, although I omit Sophocles' *Inachus* as too fragmentary, Sutton's 1979 reconstruction. For the alternate titles "Theoroi" ("Spectators" / "Embassy-members" / "Sacred Delegates" as O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 271) and "Isthmiastae" ("Isthmian Contestants") I use "Festival-goers" as deliberately ambiguous. For lost plays see Podlecki in Harrison; Sutton, 1974c; Pechstein, 1998.

Net-draggers do we know anything of the trilogy it accompanied, and here we have the titles of only two of the plays.[40] Otherwise we have the titles of eleven attested or probable tetralogies, including those that contained, severally, Aeschylus' *Persians*, *Seven Against Thebes*, *Oresteia*, and *Suppliant Women* and Euripides' *Alcestis*, *Medea*, and *Trojan Women*. Of these, all of Aeschylus' tetralogies, except for the one containing the *Persians*, appear to be connected, while the only clear connection among Euripides' tetralogies occurs in the one containing the *Trojan Women*.[41] The fact that there are no attested tetralogies by Sophocles, who, according to the *Suda*, was the first not to connect his trilogy, may not mean the loss of other connected plays.[42]

But as sparse as our evidence is, it is important, particularly as it indicates that Aeschylus deliberately connected the themes of the satyr play to those of the tragic trilogy, and did so in a way that returned the story of the tetralogy to its beginning.

In the case of *Net-draggers*, it is clear that the play was part of a Perseus sequence. Although we know neither the title of the third play nor the order of the plays, the titles *Daughters of Phorcys* and *Polydectes* suggest that the trilogy dealt with Perseus' slaying of Medusa and his rescue of his mother from Polydectes' advances. Moreover, as Aristotle says that the *Daughters of Phorcys* relied on spectacle (1456a2–3), Aeschylus may have dramatized Perseus' journey to exotic parts as well as his return and revenge.[43] This would imply

40 Sommerstein, 1996b, 62–63 suggests this was a dilogy that opened with an unconnected play.

41 Of identified tetralogies, Aeschylus' *Phineus*, *Persians*, and *Glaucus Potneius* with the satyr play *Prometheus the Fire-kindler* (produced 472), Euripides' *Cretans, Alkmeon, Telephus* and *Alcestis* (438) and his *Medea, Philoctetes, Dictys* and *Theristai* (431) are unconnected, though see Flintoff, 1992 on the *Persians* sequence. The tetralogy of Xenocles that won over Euripides' connected Trojan tetralogy (415), our only other attested tetralogy, was *Oedipus*, *Lykaon*, *Bacchae* and *Athamas* and seems unconnected. For evidence on tetralogies, Seaford, *Cyclops*, 21–26 and for Aeschylus, Sommerstein, 1996b, 53–59; Gantz, 1979 and 1980; Ussher, 1977b; Podlecki in Harrison, 1–19. For other possibilities see Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 80–81 and Ferguson, 1969 for a possible tetralogy including the *Ion* and *Heracles* with a theme of paternity.

42 Although Flintoff, 1992, 69–70 argues for Sophoclean connected tetralogies, and for the importance of connections overall; Sutton, 1984, 126–127 for a connected Sophoclean *Telepheia*, and, 1980a, 58, a pairing of satyr drama with one play of the trilogy. See Snell/Radt, *TrGF* vol. 4 for possible tetralogies; Easterling in Easterling and Knox, 45; Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 80–81 and 71 for the scholiast on Aristotle using the names of tetralogies, not of individual plays; Sutton, 1984, xii, for the difficulty of identifying connected plays.

43 Gantz, 1980, 149–151 suggests a sequence of the promise to get Medusa's head, accomplish-

a close correspondence of theme between the trilogy and the satyr play, with Polydectes' challenge to Perseus, the threat of Danae's rape, and the wonder at Perseus' arrival with the Gorgon head reflected in Silenus' baby-talk to Perseus, Danae's horror at Silenus' advances, and the wonder at the appearance of the chest. And as the trilogy presumably ended with Perseus rescuing Danae from Polydectes, the satyr play most likely ended with Polydectes' brother, Dictys (whose name is punned on in the play's title), rescuing her from Silenus.

The *Net-draggers* seems then to have echoed the themes of the Perseus trilogy, now in the absurd key of the satyrs.[44] But rather than supplying the myth with a happy ending, the satyr play, by depicting the arrival of Danae and the infant Perseus on Seriphos, gives it a happy (if nontraditional) beginning. Nor does this seem unusual. Aeschylus' Oedipus trilogy, made up of a *Laius*, an *Oedipus*, and the extant *Seven against Thebes*, ended with the satyr play the *Sphinx*. Aeschylus thus returned the audience, who had just experienced in the *Seven Against Thebes* the effect of Oedipus' curse on his sons, to the occasion of Oedipus' marriage, which caused those children, and that curse, to be engendered.[45] As such the *Sphinx* dramatized an escape from necessity that was tempered by the trilogy that had preceded it. Oedipus' success in solving the riddle would bring order to the chaos created by the satyrs, but just as the rescue of Danae in *Net-draggers* only leads to the more serious threat of Polydectes, so Oedipus' success with the Sphinx leads back into the curse the trilogy had just dramatized.[46]

The case is the same in other connected tetralogies. *Proteus*, the satyr play for the *Oresteia*, presumably depicted Menelaus kept from a passage over the Aegean by hostile winds, a situation closely parallel to Agamemnon's at

ing the promise, and the return and punishment of Polydecktes. See Werre-de Haas, 1961, 5–10 on the legend.

44 See Griffith in Harrison, 186–190. Howe, 1959, as Griffith, 2002, sees the play as essentially romantic.

45 Most scholars agree that the final entrance of Antigone and Ismene in the extant *Seven*, which requires a third actor, was added later, and that the death of the brothers was seen as ending the line of Laius; see Hutchinson, *Seven*, 209–211; Sommerstein, 1996b, 130–134; H.D. Cameron, 1971.

46 Although the *Laius* begins the trilogy, *Seven against Thebes* emphasizes Oedipus' particular curse on his children, as 69 ff., 653 ff., 709 ff. etc. Sommerstein, 1996b, 129–130 concludes from visual evidence that the satyr play ended with Oedipus arriving to solve the riddle, and see Hutchinson, *Seven*, xxvii; Simon, 1981 and in Kurtz and Sparkes, 141–142. Levi, 1908 is unusual in noticing the oddity, but concludes that the satyr play was set between the first and second play; see also Gantz, 1979, n. 67 on the sequence of the *Net-draggers* and *Circe*.

Aulis—but with the betrayal now Eidothea's advice on how to capture her father, and the sacrificial victim not Iphigenia but a seal. What Menelaus will return to, however, as he points out in the *Odyssey* (4.90 ff.), is the death of his brother. Thus his escape again leads to the tragedy that the audience had just experienced, as would be emphatic if in the satyr play, as in the *Odyssey*, Proteus prophesied the death of Agamemnon (4.512 ff.).[47]

A similar relation holds in the case of the possible tetralogy *Spirit-raisers* (*Psychagogoi*), *Penelope*, *Bone-gatherers* (*Ostologoi*), and *Circe*. Here the first play described Odysseus' encounter with Teiresias in the underworld, the second his meeting with Penelope in disguise, and the third, perhaps, the relatives come for the bodies of the slain suitors.[48] If *Circe* was the satyr drama for this trilogy, the story again returned to the beginning, paralleling Odysseus' encounter with Penelope and depicting the origin of his visit to Teiresias. And to underline the relation, Teiresias' prophecy in the first play of the trilogy (fr. 152 of *Spirit-raisers*) appears to predict Odysseus' death at the hands of Telegonus, his son by Circe.

The satyr plays of Aeschylus' other attested tetralogies also recast the necessity of the trilogy by returning to the beginning of myth. The *Lycurgus*, the satyr play to a trilogy about Lycurgus' rejection of and destruction by Dionysus, portrayed Lycurgus before the disaster, apparently made to choose between beer and wine.[49] Similarly, *Amymone*, which ended the *Suppliant Women* tetralogy, portrayed the daughters of Danaus drawing water for their father in Argos, before the arrival of the suitors and the tragedy. Amymone is attacked by a satyr and rescued by Poseidon, to whom she submits. The satyr play thus both prefigured and echoed the daughters' submission to marriage, a submission

47 See Sommerstein, 1996b, 189–190 for the thematic connection of the *Oresteia* and *Proteus*. Griffith's suggestion (2002, 237–250) that the *Proteus*, like Stesichorus, located Helen in Egypt has little to support it.

48 For *Circe* as satyric see Bardel in McHardy et al., 2005; Podlecki in Harrison, 5 and 16 for the possibility of *Bone-gatherers* as satyric, as in the reference to a chamber pot (fr. 95) and an apparent cottabus-game (fr. 94). Lloyd-Jones in Smyth and Lloyd-Jones, *Aeschylus*, 440–441 mentions both options while Gantz, 1980, 153; Sommerstein, 1996b, 56 and 348–353; and Grossardt, 2003 see the play as tragic.

49 The *Lycurgeia* (attested by the Scholion to *WT* 134) was made up of the *Edonians*, the rejection by Lycurgus, king of Edonia, of Dionysus and his rites, the *Bassarae*, possibly the death of Orpheus at the hands of the female bacchants, the Bassarae, and the *Youths* (*Neaniskoi*) presumably the destruction of Lycurgus and the celebration of Dionysus' rites, as Gantz, 1980, 140–141. In Apollodorus' version Lycurgus kills his son and perhaps his mother in the madness sent by Dionysus, and then is torn apart by horses on Mt. Pangaion.

that ended, in the satyr drama, in the discovery of the springs of Lerna (Apoll. *Library* ii.1.4), but in the tragedy that preceded it, in murder.[50] Finally, Sommerstein suggests a trilogy of *Semele*, the *Wool-carders*, and *Pentheus*, with *The Nurses of Dionysus* as satyr play.[51] If he is correct, this too would be a case where the satyr play returned to the beginning of the myth, presenting Dionysus as an infant, long before his encounter with, and destruction of, Pentheus.

Euripides' Trojan tetralogy of 415, however, seems most definitively to prove the rule. With these four plays, *Alexander*, *Palamedes*, *Trojan Women*, and *Sisyphus*, which, unlike any of Euripides' other attested tetralogies, are connected, Euripides seems to have deliberately set his hand to an Aeschylean structure.[52] Hecuba's joy at discovering her lost son Paris (or Alexander) in the *Alexander* and her disregard of Cassandra's warnings prepares for the central, desolate figure of Hecuba in the *Trojan Women* and Cassandra's prediction of the catastrophe she had foreseen earlier.[53] The first play would also add a terrible irony to Helen's sophistic claim in the *Trojan Women* that Hecuba, by giving birth to Paris, was the cause of the war (918). Similarly, the middle play, in which Odysseus treacherously destroyed Palamedes, is reflected in the first scene of the *Trojan Women*, between Athena and Poseidon. As it turns out, it is not, as the audience of the *Palamedes* would have expected, Nauplius' revenge for his son that will wreck the Greeks at sea, but rather the goddess Athena, Odysseus' patron, who has now determined on the destruction of Greeks and Trojans both.[54]

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50 For the *Amymone* see Sutton, 1980a, 16–17; Podlecki in Harrison, 8–9 and, for visual depictions, Brommer, 1959, 19; Podlecki in Harrison, 9. For the play's echoing the trilogy's themes of rape and courtship see Winnington-Ingram, 1961; A.F. Garvie, 1969, 163–233 esp. 233 and Krumeich et al., 91–97.

51 Sommerstein, 1996b, 57–59. Similarly, at 338–348, he suggests that the Achilles trilogy, *The Myrmidons, The Nereids, The Phrygians* (or *The Ransoming of Hector*) may have ended with the satyr play the *Chamber-builders* about the marriage of Priam's children, perhaps with the satyrs threatening Andromache. If so the tetralogy will have returned, as in the last play to the beginning of Hector's story, rather than Achilles'.

52 See Scodel, 1980, 18–19; Barlow, 1986, 26–29. Griffith, 2002, 237 n. 136 believes the tetralogy was not connected. For a reconstruction see Scodel, 1980 and Collard et al., *Euripides*, 2.35–104; for the *Sisyphus* Pechstein, 1998, 184–217; Krumeich et al., 442–448.

53 As in the Hypothesis, 25–30 and *Alexander* fr. 62g (Collard et al. and see p. 87): "The god caused me to make fruitless prophecies."

54 See Barlow, *Trojan Women*, 28–29 on the *Alexander* and Helen's criticisms, Cassandra, and the Nauplius theme. Murray, 1932 and 1946, sees an underlying theme of deceit that exposes the apparent victory, while Scodel, 1980, 80–104, 105–107 points to themes of nobility and slavery, wisdom and cleverness, and the rule of the stronger.

And once more the satyr play both follows the themes of the trilogy and returns us to the beginning of the story. The trilogy exhibited Odyssean manipulation in its most repulsive form, culminating with Hecuba's final discovery that she is the property of Odysseus (*TW* 1285). The satyr play returns the audience to the source of this cunning in Sisyphus, purported to be Odysseus' actual father (as *Cyclops* 104). Moreover, as Scodel has pointed out, the only myth that concerns both Sisyphus and Heracles (present in fr. 673, Collard et al.) is that in which Heracles delivers the man-eating horses stolen by Sisyphus to Eurystheus; they are then given to Glaucus and destroy him. As both the prologue to the *Trojan Women* and the first chorus, on the Trojan horse (511–567), point out, a gift of destructive horses is also terribly relevant to Hecuba's story.[55]

If, as I have argued, the aim of the satyr play was to balance, not outweigh, the mood of the tragic trilogy, it is not surprising that playwrights would attempt to somewhat mitigate their effect. This may be one reason for the satyrs' air of strangeness and location at the edge of civilization, which we will examine in the next section. And it could be the reason the satyr play returned to the beginning of the story. Such an arrangement gives the satyr play the last word in the performance, while the trilogy still narrates the end of the myth. By returning to the beginning, the satyr play recalls the trilogy that preceded it and, rather than blotting out the impression that the tragic trilogy had made, provides a balance of tragedy and comedy.[56] The result juxtaposes the two moods of necessity and release, with neither outweighing the other.

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55 The second stasimon (799–858) referring to Heracles, horses, and the first Trojan War, reinforces the connection. For the man-eating horses as the topic of the *Sisyphus* see Murray, 1946, 142. If, with Dihle, 1977 we see Critias 43 F 19 as belonging to this *Sisyphus*, its cynicism would be an ironic counterpart to Athena and Poseidon: where the trilogy gave us human cunning within a world controlled by brutal gods, the satyr drama would give us human cunning as even creating those gods, as Scodel, 1980, 129–131.

56 See Gantz, 1979, 299–300 for fears that "the burlesquing of characters from the tragic portion of a presentation would destroy the overall impact." In contrast Easterling in Easterling, 1997, 42 (opposing Lissarrague on the satyrs as antitype): "A more holistic view based on the strong likelihood that the same performers participated in these different kinds of show might suggest that tragedy and satyr play, taken together, offer a model for holding contradiction in some kind of equipoise."

2.2 *Freedom and Slavery, Satyrs and Cities*

2.2.1 Freedom and Slavery

The satyr drama we possess is an arbitrary selection, determined only by the chance survival of some scraps of papyri and a lone manuscript. The fact that all four substantial examples, the three examined previously and Euripides' *Cyclops*, considered in the next section, contain an underlying reference to entrapment and slavery seems therefore significant.[57] In the *Net-draggers*, Danae and the infant Perseus float onto the island of Seriphos entrapped in their chest, only to fall into the power of Silenus, who is determined to marry her; in the *Festival-goers*, the satyrs are preparing to enter the Isthmian games, and their desire to escape their servitude to Dionysus makes up the bulk of our fragment; in the *Trackers*, the theme is introduced apparently gratuitously, when Apollo suddenly offers Silenus and his satyr-sons freedom in exchange for the recovery of his cattle (63), leading them to their hunt and encounter with Cyllene, a nymph tending the infant Hermes, the unlikely culprit who has stolen the cattle. Correspondingly, the *Cyclops* alters Homer's account in *Odyssey* 9 by adding satyrs, whose enslavement to Polyphemus becomes a constant theme of the play. This same scenario appears in the titles and fragments of other satyr plays, where the satyrs are enslaved to various improbable masters, while the masters themselves are often famous for constraining passersby. The kinds of compulsion involved are various: wrestling matches (Aeschylus' *Cercyon*), boxing matches (Sophocles' *Amycus*), vineyard work (Euripides' *Syleus*), human sacrifice (Euripides' *Busirus*), or simply being thrown off a cliff (Euripides' *Sciron*). The theme, however, seems constant.

In the *Net-draggers*, constraint appears primarily in Silenus' attempt to force Danae into marriage. This theme too appears to have been common in satyr drama, and naturally, given the satyrs' traditional desire to rape any maenad, nymph, or heroine unfortunate enough to cross their path. The theme appears also in *The Marriage of Helen*, with its suddenly lust-stricken satyrs (Aristides 46, 307, 14), in Euripides' *Iris*, if the numerous vases with satyrs attacking Iris are evidence, on the vase that depicts satyrs attacking Hera, and in the *Amymone*, where the fragment—"It is fate for you to be married, and for me to marry" (fr. 4)—spoken, apparently, by a satyr, implies a rather comic version of destiny.[58] The necessity involved in a confrontation with the underworld is also common, as in *Sisyphus the Runaway*, *Eurystheus*, or the *Satyrs at*

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57 This is also the case in Sophocles' *Inachus*, not treated here, which dealt with Io's transformation and Argus' guard over her, as Lloyd-Jones, *Sophocles*, 112–135.

58 See Sommerstein, 1996b, 152, n. 3 for the speaker as Silenus. For the Hera vase Green

Taenarius.[59] Heracles' servitude is the topic of the *Omphale*; the *Inachus* portrayed Io under the control of Argus; the *Aithon* described the repeated selling of Mestra into slavery; and vases show us the compulsion of Medea's magic cauldron and of Circe, complete with satyrs turned into apes.[60] Overall, in fact, bondage—sexual, magical, brutal, of slavery, of violence, of words, or of just plain work—seems to be the single most prevalent theme in satyr drama. And in nearly all of these cases, what the satyr play enacts is the escape from that bondage.[61]

Satyr drama thus seems to have balanced the necessity portrayed in tragedy against a theme of entrapment and escape. But, as with the tendency of satyr plays to return to the beginning of the myth, there is a complication, and one that prevents the escape of the satyrs from appearing simply as a solution to the necessity of the tragic trilogy. Satyrs are by definition the slaves of Dionysus. As a result the satyrs' escape from bondage is also always an escape back into bondage, as it returns them to their servitude to the god. The situation recalls Leopold Bloom's misrecollection of Exodus: "All that long business about that brought us out of the land of Egypt and into the house of bondage" (Joyce, *Ulysses* 7.208). In *Festival-goers*, for example, the satyrs' refusal to serve Dionysus could only have led, with the return of their unknown benefactor, to their own return to Dionysus' service. Similarly, in the *Trackers*, the devotion that the satyrs show to their new "dear god" (or "own god," *theos ho philos*, 76), Apollo, is in deliberate contrast to their proper devotion to Dionysus. As satyrs, the satyrs always escape necessity, but the effect is also cyclical, since their escape means also, as in the last lines of the *Cyclops*—"And for us, we will be fellow-sailors with this Odysseus / and from now on, to Bacchus we will be slaves" (708–709)—a return to their familiar servitude.[62]

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and Handley, 27–28; for Iris Brommer, 1959, 23–24; Sutton, 1980a, 71; Bieber, 1961, 48a; *Lovers of Achilles* may have had a similar theme.

59 Aeschylus' *Sisyphus* play concerned his escape from Hades; Sophocles' *Satyrs at Taenarius*, like Euripides' *Eurystheus*, Heracles' descent to fetch Cerberus. The satyrs may have been Laconian slaves, as Herodian says they were called helots. For a summary of the servitude theme, Seaford, *Cyclops*, 33–36.

60 On Medea as connected with Aeschylus' *Trophoi* see Podlecki in Harrison, 14–15, and on *Circe*, p. 5.

61 Easterling in Easterling 1997, 43: "In each case the action of the play moves towards liberation and ultimate triumph or celebration." Norwood, 1930 sees a traditional satyric plot of Dionysus' followers entrapped and freed also in comedy while Sutton, 1971 and Griffith, 2002 see this basic plot in Euripides' prosatyric plays and romances, categories which may overlap.

62 Sutton, 1980a, 159: "the restoration of the satyrs to their proper master Dionysus at the end

2.2.2 Satyrs and Civilization

> "What's tobacco, Walt? You say it's a kind of leaf, and you bought eighty tons of it? You bought eighty tons of leaves?" … "You put it on a piece of paper, and roll it up? … Oh, between your lips, then what do you do to it, Walt? You set fire to it? Then, you inhale the smoke? Well, I think you're gonna have kind of a tough time selling people on stuffing burning leaves in their mouths."
>
> BOB NEWHART[63]

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The primary difference, however, between the kind of escape presented in satyr drama and the escape we will see in comedy stems from the nature of the satyrs. Unlike the gods and heroes who people myth, even those, like Heracles, who are themselves liminal, satyrs are fundamentally outside of civilization. Even centaurs, with whom the satyrs are often grouped, tend to represent an anti-civilization.[64] In contrast, the satyrs, as in Plato's description of satyr dancing, are *ou politikon*, not of the *polis* at all (*Laws* 815c).[65] Like Bob Newhart's imagined conversation with Walter Raleigh, above, satyrs, simply through their non-comprehension, force us to see the familiar in a new light.

In the case of the satyrs, the familiar is largely the world of the *polis*, and the lack of understanding comes from the satyrs' existence outside of it. Given the small amount of satyr drama we possess, it is remarkable how consistently it depicts elements of civilization as new and mysterious. In Aeschylus' *Festival-goers*, for example, where the satyrs have abandoned their service to Dionysus to become athletes at the Isthmian games, the ninety lines that survive show

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of plays such as *Cyclops*, in which they have been forcibly separated from him, may be regarded as a restoration of the natural order of things."

63 "The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart" (Warner Bros., 1960).

64 See Lissarrague in Carpenter and Faraone. Voelke, 2001 argues against this view, seeing satyrs as rather blurring the boundaries, but exaggerates the satyrs' assistance in recuperating civilized values.

65 Seaford, *Cyclops*, 5–45 sees this as essential and linked to the satyrs' ritual function as *thiasos*. Konstan's structuralist argument in Winkler and Zeitlin, 1990 locates Odysseus as the mean between over-civilization, represented by the Cyclops, and the satyrs, representing the wild; Hall, 1998, 36 sees the satyrs' sexuality as "embedded in nature."

us the satyrs responding with amazement both to images of themselves and to a new and fearful instrument, most likely a javelin.[66] In Sophocles' *Trackers*, where the satyrs and Silenus hunt for the cattle of Apollo and light upon the infant Hermes, nearly half of the four hundred extant lines (131–333, of a play probably of about eight hundred lines) concern their astonishment at Hermes' newly invented lyre. Euripides' *Cyclops*, which retells the story of the *Odyssey*, makes much of the Cyclops' first encounter with wine, a change from Homer's version, where the Cyclopes have wine already (*Od.* 9.110–111). Among many other examples, Aeschylus' *Lycurgus* seems to involve a contest between beer and wine, presumably newly introduced, while his *Prometheus the Fire-kindler* introduced fire to the satyrs; Sophocles' *Little Dionysus* also introduced wine to the satyrs, while his *Pandora* included them at the creation of woman; and Sositheos, in the third century, seems to have written a satyr play about the discovery of archery.[67]

The existence of the satyrs on the edges of "the known" is also reflected temporally, in the amount of satyr plays that concern the infancy of gods or heroes. Of our extant fragments, Aeschylus' *Net-draggers*, where the satyrs and Silenus discover Danae and her son in a chest at sea, portrays Perseus as a baby, as the *Trackers* portrays Hermes. The titles of *Little Dionysus*, previously mentioned, the *Little Heracles* and the *Nurses of Dionysus* point to the same theme, which also seems to have been treated in Sophocles' *Amphiaraos*, Xenocles' *Athamas*, and Timesitheos' *Birth of Zeus*, while Sophocles' *Lovers of Achilles* must have portrayed Achilles as a youth.[68] Similarly, in another common theme, the satyrs are enslaved to ogres whose overthrow heralds the coming of civilization, hence their regular association with Heracles.[69] And they are also on the edges of civilization spatially, commonly associated with the underworld, or as neighbors to the mountain nymph Cyllene in the *Trackers*, as hunters in the *Net-draggers*,

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66 See Lloyd-Jones in Smyth and Lloyd-Jones, *Aeschylus*, 545–546. Sommerstein, 1996b, 335 cites Taplin suggesting that Dionysus returns with "new toys" or instruments of bondage, and see 333–335 for an overall account of the play.

67 O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 34–35; Seaford, *Cyclops*, 36–37 on invention as a basic theme; Lissarrague in Carpenter and Faraone, 220 sees the satyrs as newcomers to culture while Rothwell, 2007, 81, 92–99 sees the theme as a sign of satyrs straddling the realms of civilization and nature.

68 Seaford, *Cyclops*, 38, who points as well to *Cyclops* 142 and 521 (see notes ad loc.) as indicating that the theme was common.

69 See Kott, 1973, 155 on Heracles as civilizer and Silk, 1985 on his fit, in his many contradictions, with satyr drama and comedy. For the association of satyrs and the underworld, see Seaford, *Cyclops*, 37–38.

or lodged with the primitive Cyclops. In fact, stage convention, according to Vitruvius, identified the stage building in tragedy as a palace, in comedy as an ordinary house, and in satyr drama as a cave.[70]

Even evidence that might seem to point in the other direction, the increasing popularity in the fifth century of vases depicting satyrs with families, or engaged in ordinary human activities, in fact confirms the satyrs' distance from civilization. As in the *Festival-goers*, where the satyrs become athletes, a good deal of the humor of satyr drama came from the satyrs' adoption of incongruous roles. The theme appears in the titles of *Net-draggers*, *Trackers*, *Reapers*, and *Hammerers*, as well as in plays where the satyrs appeared as shepherds (*Cyclops*), herdsmen (Sophocles' *Inachus*), Helots (Sophocles' *Heracles*), vine workers (Euripides' *Sileus*), wise councilors (as on vases), and not fewer than four separate times as athletes.[71] But the reason for portraying satyrs in ordinary human occupations is exactly that for satyrs they are not ordinary. Like the vases that depict satyr-children, in the way of all satyrs, as balding, the closer satyrs come to the regular world of human beings, the more they stand out as outside it.

Enough survives of Aeschylus' *Net-draggers* and *Festival-goers* and Sophocles' *Trackers* to make it clear that the juxtaposition of a civilized view to one utterly innocent of civilization lies at the heart of all three plays. Thus the humor of the *Festival-goers* lies in the satyrs' unsuitability to the games,[72] while in *Net-draggers* it comes from Silenus' grotesque proposal of himself as step-daddy to Perseus and in the satyrs' reaction: that after so long at sea, Danae must be ready for sex with all of them (824–826). Similarly, the humor of the *Trackers* comes from the satyrs' unconventional tracking, their amazement at the sound of the lyre, and, in a turnaround, their irrational but correct idea that the infant in the cave has stolen the cattle. In all these cases the comic element lies in the satyrs' unfamiliarity with civilized ways. As Cyllene (apparently annoyed by the satyrs' playing with their phalluses while she addresses them, *Track*. 368) tells them (collectively): "You're always just a child, for even as a young man, / glorying in your little yellow beard, you're wanton

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70 Vitruvius 5.6.9, and see Simon, 1982, 21–26; Ussher, 1971, 167 and the Boscoreale wall paintings in Bieber, 1961, 124–125, figs. 471–474; Griffith in Revermann and Wilson, 77–78.

71 For vases with satyrs as "out of their element or incompetent" see Hedreen in Csapo and Miller, 2007, 166 and 190 n. 62; Mitchell, 2009, 200–203; as athletes see *Festival-goers, Amphiauraos, Oeneus, Athloi.*

72 As Ussher, 1977b, 297. Unfortunately we do not have enough of the play to know who wished to sail with the satyrs (93) and so what myth is involved.

as a goat." (366–367).[73] The satyrs, as we shall see, are neither simply beasts nor children, but their existence outside civilization makes them resemble both.

As creatures at the edges of civilization, the satyrs, although very humanlike animals, are regularly referred to as "beasts."[74] This also marks the major difference between satyr drama's view of necessity and that of comedy. The satyr is characterized, as Ussher puts it, by "his selfishness and marked pursuit of policies, however contradictory, unprincipled, or devious, which will lead to his own self-preservation."[75] Which is just what a creature beyond *nomos* would do (as *Republic* 359b ff.). For the satyrs, who have no concern with the *polis*, wine, dance, sex, and feasting are natural, collective, and even requisite, as part (and not an unpleasant part) of their servitude to Dionysus. These same activities are also basic in comedy, but here, where they are the hallmarks of freedom and individual self-assertion, they are set against the requirements of the *polis*, and so have become transgressive.[76]

The contrast emerges most clearly in a chance similarity. As it happens, the model for an early scene in Aristophanes' *Wasps*, Odysseus' escape from Polyphemus' cave, is also the basis of the satyr play the *Cyclops*. Philocleon, the hero who attempts this escape in *Wasps*, also resembles the satyrs in his emergent interest in wine, sex, and dance and in his irresponsible self-indulgence. Moreover, the basic theme of the *Wasps*, containment and escape, is also, as we have seen, dominant in satyr drama.[77] Unlike the satyrs, however, Philocleon's

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73 Similarly, at *Inachus* 22 Inachus is so irate that he breaks out into comic language, as Sutton, 1979, 30.

74 As in Danae's lament at *Net-draggers*, 775 that she is given to wild beasts, or Silenus' reproach at *Trackers* 153. The references in *Cyclops* to beasts (117, 619 etc.) and hunting (*thereuo* 71, 130) gives the introduction of a new, political context both its incongruity and its point.

75 Ussher, 1971, 171. Griffith's much milder view (2002 and in Harrison) makes them into a submissive *demos* rather than "antitypes of the Athenian male citizenry" (Lissarrague in Winkler and Zeitlin, 235; Lassère in Seidensticker, 1989).

76 As this transgression is the comic hero's stock in trade, however, arguments that fault comic characters for focusing on food or drink are necessarily flawed, as Sommerstein, 1984, 323, arguing against Saïd and Foley. For the importance of food and wine in Old Comedy see Wilkins, 341–354 and Dalby, 397–405, both in Harvey and Wilkins. The fact that wine is both a "natural" object of desire, linked to food and sex, and a foundational element of civilization reinforces the liminal position of the satyrs, and of Dionysus himself.

77 See Sutton, 1974, 174; Ussher, *Cyclops*, 202–204 for various views of the relation of *Cyclops* and *Wasps*.

transgression generates a complicated response. The satyrs provoke exasperation and resigned acceptance in the other characters on stage; Philocleon provokes anger. The reason seems to be largely the setting. Satyrs will always be satyrs, and can be, because the world that they occupy is exactly suited to their nature. The case of the comic hero, whose proper environment is the *polis*, is different. Although his lawlessness may pass as license, it is also, in the social context of comedy, *hybris*, and so, as the *Wasps* emphasizes, an indictable offense (1303, 1319, 1418, 1441).[78]

Both the satyrs' necessity and their freedom are elements of the world of nature, a world with which Dionysus is also often connected.[79] As such they set off the necessity and freedom depicted in both tragedy and comedy. The cyclical necessity encountered by the satyrs is very different from the absolute necessity encountered by a tragic hero like Orestes or Oedipus. Similarly, the satyrs' freedom is very unlike that of a comic hero. When compared to tragedy, comedy's concern with wine, sex, dance, and feasting appears to champion the natural world over the constraints of the *polis*. And so, in many ways, it does. But when we compare comedy to satyr drama, as the audience of the Dionysia was invited to do, it becomes clear that, in contrast to the satyrs, both the heroes of comedy and the particular escape from necessity that they seek very much belong to the *polis*.

3 The *Cyclops*

3.1 *The* Cyclops *as Satyr Play*

Euripides' *Cyclops* is a double kind of a play. Although, as we will see here, there are many ways in which it is typical of its genre, there are also many ways, as we will see in the next section, in which it reflects Euripides' tendency toward genre-bending.[80] Accordingly, it helps us grasp the relation of tragedy,

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78 See Dover, 1972, 37 and, for *hybris*, Wise, 1998, 156–157; N.R.E. Fisher, 1976 and 1992. Rothwell, 2007, 147 sums up comedy's view of nature: "Rarely is nature valued for itself; almost never does it or its creatures become a force to be in awe of, as in tragedy. Almost nothing gets out of human control in comedy, for human beings are endowed with the powers of nature, rather than just being at their mercy."

79 For Dionysus' connection to the wild see, for example, C. Segal, 1997; Otto, 1965; Lada-Richards, 1999, 6–9; Easterling in Easterling, 44–53 and for Dionysus in the *Bacchae*, Chapter Three.

80 For the *Cyclops* as "atypical of standard satyric fare" see Ussher, 1977, 288; Seidensticker in Krumeich et al. 3 and in Gregory, 50; Marshall in Harrison, 103; Pechstein, 1988. Seaford,

comedy, and satyr drama in two opposite ways. Where it conforms to the general characteristics of satyr drama, it further illustrates the world of the satyrs and its contrast to the world of the heroes. But as the play also begins to question the nature of theatrical reality, it shows us, by breaking through the barrier between comedy and satyr drama, the difference between them, and so the difference in the ways either was paired with tragedy.

The most obvious way in which the *Cyclops* corresponds to the general outline of satyr drama is that the source of much of its humor lies in the inappropriateness of the satyrs being where they are. This begins in the prologue, with Silenus' far-fetched explanation of how his care for Dionysus has led to enslavement in the Cyclops' cave, and continues in the incongruous appearance of the satyr chorus as herders of Polyphemus' sheep. The lingering question of why the satyrs themselves were not eaten (as Silenus catalogues in some detail the Cyclops' monstrosities) is answered by Polyphemus' remark that, bouncing around as they do, they would just give him a bellyache (220–221). The humor derived from the satyrs' incongruous presence in a familiar story continues in Silenus' fluster at the arrival of Odysseus, who, as Polyphemus' most famous visitor, is hardly unexpected, and in the audience's anticipation of the satyrs' encounter with the wine that Odysseus is visibly carrying.[81] The setup is thus precisely what we expect: a comically inappropriate appearance of satyrs in an otherwise serious story.

As the humor of the play begins with the incongruous presence of the satyrs, it continues in the mismatch of their given nature and the adventure at hand. Their exuberance comes first. In the *Cyclops*, as in the dance/hunt of the chorus in the *Trackers*, the chorus's entry exploits all the possibilities of the standard satyric dance, the *sikinnis* (37), here in a crowd of bounding satyrs attempting to herd a few mystified sheep across the stage.[82] The humor continues with Silenus revealing his given character in the midst of such incongruous circumstances. Thus, just as the word that brings Silenus onto stage in the *Trackers*

Cyclops, 16–19 sees the "degeneration" apparent in the *Cyclops* as part of an overall move away from Dionysus.

81 As Conacher, 1967, 318.

82 Possibly with real sheep, as Seaford *Cyclops*, 106–107; Ussher, *Cyclops*, 181, and opposed P.D. Arnott, 1961, 167. For the *Trackers* see Tony Harrison's version, 31: "Sniff, sniff / sniff at the track / we've gotta get t'god's cattle back," parodying the Furies' search in the *Oresteia*. On the *sikinnis* see Seaford 1984, 103–104; Bates, 1916 for vase depictions, and for satyr dance overall; Seidensticker in Taplin and Wyles. What is not standard is the metatheatrical reference to the *sikinnis* (or the *schemata* of l. 221), presumably why this is "the only certain reference in satyric drama to the dance" (Seaford, *Cyclops*, 104).

is "profit" (*misthos* l. 44), in the *Cyclops* he immediately responds to Odysseus' arrival by offering to sell off the Cyclops' goods. His utter incorrigibility is further confirmed by his immediate and eloquent denial of the cheat, his inability to tear himself away from the wine, the comic sequence of his stealing drinks while pouring for the Cyclops, his encouragement of violence imposed upon someone else, and his and the satyrs' braggadocio—and immediate disappearance in the face of danger.[83]

In the *Cyclops* also, as in the plays previously examined, the satyrs add an obscene touch, reducing the great struggle of the Trojan War (as Odysseus presents it) to its most crudely sexual terms (179–186) and suggesting to the Cyclops the role of "bridegroom," which he enthusiastically adopts (495–502, 511–518), unexpectedly in regard to Silenus. The satyrs' fecklessness is brought out in the sudden dissipation of their eagerness for revenge when faced with actual danger, the unfortunate accident of spraining their (collective) ankle while standing still (635–640), and their enthusiastic participation in the blinding of the Cyclops, by singing a particularly bloodthirsty chorus to accompany it.

The confrontation also reveals the essential humor of satyr drama, which lies not so much in the satyrs' cowardice, or in their exaggerated boasts of courage when free from danger, as it does in their inability, as hard as they may try, to take the danger seriously. Although Euripides can write romances, he can also create an utterly terrifying sense of necessity. Tragedies such as the *Hippolytus*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, or *Bacchae* show us human beings entrapped in a net of history or hypocrisy, destiny or divine whim. The *Cyclops* shows us a scene of ultimate entrapment, and the utter incapacity of the satyrs to stay focused on the problem. As in their complete inability to be quiet (624–629), or in the Cyclops' perception that even being eaten would not stop them from dancing (220–221), this is simply a given of their nature. As a result, the more striking and grisly the compulsion (and Euripides takes care to dwell on the gruesome details), the more striking is its contrast to the satyrs. The effect is to set off the Cyclops' compulsion, and Odysseus' escape, as part of a world very far removed from the necessity encountered in tragedy.

The contrast between the necessity of tragedy and that of satyr drama contains one more, now metatheatrical, twist. As we have seen, the last lines of the *Cyclops* remind us that the satyrs escape Polyphemus only to return

83 All of which appear in the *Net-draggers* and *Trackers* as well, as in Silenus' abuse of the satyrs for fearing the sound of the lyre, and immediate disappearance when he hears it himself (*Track.* 132–209).

to their servitude to Dionysus. But even this is not the end of the story. The satyrs' "escape" can last only until the next satyr play, when the satyrs will find themselves, once more, bound up in compulsion, and once more rescued to return to the service of Dionysus. The conventions of satyr drama guarantee a role for Silenus and his sons. As a result, just as it is a given that Harpo and Groucho will live to see another movie, so the satyrs are bound to eternally escape in order to be entrapped, and escape, and be entrapped once more. In Homer the immortality of the gods can imply that the world, for them, is finally comic, as their actions can entail, for them, no ultimate consequences.[84] For the satyrs the same result is guaranteed by the exigencies of the stage.

It is here that the *Cyclops* touches most closely the essential nature of satyr drama: necessity is simply not the same for the satyrs as it is for Odysseus. The satyrs are able to grow old (*Cycl.* 2), but apparently do not die; they are something below gods, but also something beyond mere mortals.[85] The interplay of necessity, entrapment, and escape, so serious for mortals, is finally as fraught, and no more fraught, for the satyrs than the cycle of nature (and of the dramatic festivals) that they inhabit. As a result, for the satyrs, irresponsibility is a job description.[86] If the vase painters first hired them for the position, it was the Athenian stage that granted them tenure.

3.2 *Euripides the Iconoclast*

With the *Cyclops*, however, this is not the whole story. The play may be our only complete satyr drama, but it is also by Euripides, and as we have seen, Euripides was more than willing to experiment with genre. The experimentation appears, for example, in a fragment from the *Sisyphus* that incorporates contemporary sophistic debates in declaring that humans invented the gods in order to enforce morality. If, as Albrecht Dihle has argued, this is from the *Sisyphus* that served as satyr play to Euripides' Trojan trilogy, it shows that Euripides was willing to incorporate a level of contemporary reference not usual in satyr drama.[87]

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84 As *Iliad* 22.18–20.

85 Theopompus (*FGH* 75c3–4) on Silenus: "more obscure (*aphanesteros*) than a god in nature, but greater (*kreitton*) than a human being, since he is also immortal"; Seaford, *Cyclops*, 32; O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 18–19.

86 In the original, 1927, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy* Pickard-Cambridge, 169, cites Gilbert Murray's wonderful rendering of *amechanoergoi* as "impossibly-behaved" to describe the satyrs.

87 Dihle, 1977, as also Pechstein, 185–191 (who also suggests the *Autolycus*); Scodel, 1980, 122–137; and Ostwald in Breyfogle, 40–42. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 9.54

The same seems to be true of the *Cyclops*. While the play follows, in many respects, the traditional outline of satyr drama, in other ways it reveals Euripides' tendency to push at the boundaries. In the fragments of satyr drama that we have already examined, for example, there are no contemporary references, and the serious characters do not move out of their serious roles or their tragic diction.[88] The only instance that might be taken for metatheater appears in the *Festival-goers*, when the satyrs nail likenesses, which presumably recall their masks, to the temple in which they have taken sanctuary. The main point of the joke, however, seems to be not the self-reference, but the satyrs' amazement, both at the (traditional) placing of satyr masks at the cornices of temples and at seeing for the first time an image of themselves.[89]

The *Cyclops* takes a different approach. Although the play begins with an emphasis on the contrast of satyrs and story, as it progresses it moves into an examination of the discrepancy between the way heroism is represented and the way it actually is. As we will see, the concern is closely involved with metatheater and moves satyr drama toward a position that usually belongs to comedy.

The problem is not with the satyrs, who maintain their traditional role. It is rather with the rest of the play, which begins on the one hand to question the nature of heroism, and on the other to play with the conventions of dramatic reality. The result is that Euripides undermines the serious world that should serve as the satyrs' foil. The shift begins with Odysseus. In accordance with what

attributes the fragment (correspondingly labeled Critias 43 F 19) to Critias and Davies, 1989 argues against Dihle. See O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 440–441 for further sources.

88 In two possible exceptions, fr. 113 of the *Amphiaraus* refers to a "prophetic chorus" and fr. 295 of the *Inachus* to a *kemos*, possibly a voting box, suggested as well by fr. 288 "a bean-throwing juror." In general, however, satyr drama distinguished itself in this respect from Old Comedy, as Sandbach, 1977, 49–50; Bowie, 324–327 in Harvey and Wilkins; Bakola, 2010, 81–117. See Sutton, 1980a, 162–163 for the absence of contemporary reference in satyr drama and Lissarrague in Winkler and Zeitlin, 235–236 for satyr drama following "tragedy in its complete respect for the fiction of the stage" (236). For the *Cyclops* as crossing into comic territory see Ussher, *Cyclops*, 173 and Tanner, 1915.

89 Shaw, 2014, 82; Lloyd-Jones in Smyth and Lloyd-Jones, *Aeschylus*, 543 argues after Fraenkel, 1942 that the reference is to antefixes. For readings of the passage as metatheatrical see Easterling in Easterling, 1997, 42; J.R. Green, 1994, 45–46 (who concludes: "this is probably as far as one could go in a satyr play"); and Zeitlin in Goldhill and Osborne, 1994, 138–139 for the scene as *ekphrasis*. O'Sullivan, 2000, 353–366, who views the scene as self-parody, gives a bibliography on the objects, often seen as satyr masks. Seaford, *Cyclops*, 19 cites fourteen cases of paratragedy in *Cyclops*, and one elsewhere, Soph. fr. 331 Snell/Radt.

we have seen, his character should be simply tragic, and it is often taken this way.[90] But from the moment Silenus first recognizes him as "that glib sharper, Sisyphus' bastard" (104) there are difficulties. Odysseus does in fact swindle Silenus, claiming to have no money to trade with until Silenus is too drunk to care (139, 160). He slips with extraordinary readiness into the conclusion that, if the gods do not aid him, there are no gods (354–355, 606–607) and seems congenitally unable to decide whether "we" or "I" was responsible for the fall of Troy (199–200, 347, 351–352, 603–605, 694–695). The satyrs' idea of a good way to deal with Helen, gang rape, is not surprising in satyr drama. Odysseus' sophistic defense of the Trojan War is. By the time we reach the claim that, since (Mycenaean!) Sicily is Greek, Polyphemus too has benefited from the war (290–298), we might wonder what century we are supposed to be in, particularly as the speech is surprisingly similar to the Athenians' attempt at Camarina to take over Sicily (Thuc. 6.82, 88).[91] In fact, if we were not involved in a satyr play, we might think the speech sounded rather like a parody of Athenian imperialism, an impression only reinforced by the play's insistent references to Sicily and Mount Aetna (95, 106, 114, 130, 298, 366, 395, etc.).[92]

Although, as Bierl in particular has argued, the chorus of tragedy (and with it, presumably, satyr drama) remained in touch with its role as chorus, metatheater on the part of the actors, as well as a reference to contemporary events, belonged to the world of comedy, not that of the satyr play. In the *Cyclops*, however, a reference to contemporary attitudes runs throughout. If Odysseus' speech to Polyphemus calls the nature of heroism into question, the Cyclops' sophistic reply—"Wealth, little man, is the only god for the wise; / the rest is just boasts and putting a good shape on words" (316–317)—does little to alleviate

90 Often with the accompanying judgment that his character, and the play as a whole, is unsuccessful, as P.D. Arnott, 1961; Sutton, 1980a, 102–103; Tanner, 1915. Reckford, 1987, 105–106 sees Odysseus as heroic and the play as simplified, like a fairy tale. For similar views see Sutton, 1974, 185 and in Easterling and Knox, 99: "Odysseus is a simple hero, and Polyphemus a simple villain. The quality of Odysseus' revenge is scarcely called into question, even in respect of its brutality or its fraudulent nature." In contrast, see Arrowsmith, 1956, 6–8 and Roisman in Harrison, 67–82. Hamilton's argument (1979, 291–292) that Odysseus takes the place of Silenus, who disappears after l. 589, suggests in addition that Euripides has undone the basic contrast of satyr drama.

91 See Seaford, 1975, 204–207 and on line 291 as a "cheap and desperate rhetorical trick" (204). The speech recalls Thucydides in depicting Athens as liberating Greece, the presence of an outside threat, and the weakness of the speakers. For the date of the *Cyclops*, quite possibly after this speech, see the end of this section.

92 Seaford, *Cyclops*, 100 n. 20 points out that Thucydides (6.2), not Homer, set the Cyclopes in Sicily.

the problem. Since we just learned that these Cyclopes, unlike Homer's, do not have bread or wine (121–124), the apotheosis of wealth comes as something of a surprise. As the conversation continues, the opinions of Gorgias, Protagoras, and Anaxagoras seem to have insinuated themselves into the Cyclops' disdain for the gods and human *nomos*. And if there were any doubt about the serious characters of the drama being capable of metatheater, Odysseus' comment on leaving the Cyclops' cave—"Zeus, what can I say? The horrors I saw in that cave, / unbelievable, like what men do in myths, not in real life!" (375–376)—settles the question.

As we will see, the threads of sophistication that Euripides introduces into the first half of the *Cyclops* result, by the end of the play, in a questioning of the nature of heroism on the one hand, and of the construction of reality on the other. Both of these issues crystallize around the most radical aspect of the play, a movement from the usual discrepancy between satyrs and story to a new kind of discrepancy, between the story and the stage itself.[93] The tendency begins with Odysseus' apparently standard "messenger" speech, describing what happened in the cave. Odysseus is not sparing in his description of the terrible power of the giant: the household fire made of a load of logs that would need three wagons to draw (384–385), the Cyclops' cup made out of a hundred-gallon vat (388), the bowls as big as Aetna (393–394), and, as in Homer, two men snatched up as easily as puppies (*Cycl.* 397, *Od.* 288–290). The proportions, which outdo even Homer, are awesome, until we recollect that we just saw this Cyclops, in the far more ordinary proportions of a human actor, enter his cave.[94]

The hyperbole of Odysseus' speech not only illustrates the ability of language to recreate reality, it also points to a fundamental problem with the subject. Giants are not easy to present on stage. The difficulty is exacerbated by problems more particular to this story. On stage, Polyphemus' cave would be represented by the stage building, or *skene*, that contained the actors' stage door. Since there must be free ingress and egress from the building, the criti-

93 As distinguished from cases that arise simply out of the situation, as the humor natural to a drunken one-eyed giant. In other cases Euripides is playing with his source, as in bettering Homer's "unmixed milk" (*Od.* 9.297) with a precise mixture of cows' and ewes' milk (216–219, as Seaford, *Cyclops*, 147 and 1975, 200).

94 The discrepancy is reinforced by Polyphemus' address to Odysseus (315) as "*anthropiskos*" as if the actor was diminutive; Ussher, *Cyclops*, 186 suggests very high buskins. The conditions of the stage are easily forgotten, as in Seaford's comment (1975, 198; and see Ussher, 1971, 173) on the Cyclops' entrance as "Orion" (213): "For the cowering satyrs he dominates the prospect, no less inescapable than the massive hunter in the sky"—an effect inherently humorous on stage.

cal element of Homer's story, the rock that traps Odysseus and his men inside the cave, is impossible. Even more significantly, since all the action of the play, by Athenian stage convention, occurs outside, the actors cannot be confined at all. The result is that there is no entrapment, a point Euripides underlines by having both Odysseus and Silenus repeatedly move into and out of the cave. The Cyclops is outside the cave, the satyrs are outside the cave, Odysseus is outside the cave, and there is nothing blocking the entrance. As Odysseus himself points out (480–482), there is no reason why Odysseus, and presumably also his men, should not escape any time they wish.[95]

The discrepancy due to staging also has an even more significant effect. In the *Odyssey*, the necessity, and the cleverness, of Odysseus' blinding the Cyclops (possible because the Cyclops has only one eye) is due to the rock that blocks the cave's entrance. Odysseus cannot remove the rock, which twenty-two four-wheeled wagons would be unable to budge (*Od.* 9.240–244), so he must incapacitate the Cyclops in such a way that he can remove the barrier, but not perceive Odysseus' men leaving. Euripides' version is rather different. Since there is no rock, the only reason for the horrific blinding is revenge, along with Odysseus' rather obsessive concern with the reputation he won in sacking Troy (198–202, 347–349, 603–605, 694–695).

Euripides makes a similar use of the other central feature of the *Odyssey* episode, Odysseus' identification of himself as "Noman." In the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus' cry that "Noman is destroying me" sends away the other Cyclopes who had come to his aid (9.408 ff.). On stage, however, a company of giants is difficult to manage. Euripides solves the problem by having Polyphemus direct his calls for help not to the other Cyclopes, but to the satyrs. The trick occasions a slapstick game of blind man's bluff, but this is all that it accomplishes. Since the satyrs know perfectly well who "Noman" is (and have to, since as the chorus they are always on stage), and since they were hardly disposed to help the Cyclops in the first place, the deception increases Polyphemus' misery but serves no purpose in relation to Odysseus or his men.

In both of these instances Euripides has solved the problem of how to bring Homer on stage by rendering the Homeric story essentially meaningless.[96] In so doing he also begins to confuse the question of who is the hero and

95 These lines can also be seen as added to "fix" the discrepancy. See Seaford, *Cyclops*, 194 for the arguments on both sides.

96 Despite his view of the play as typical (1971, 171) Ussher notes that the taunting is "a kind of hideous Blind man's bluff" (172) and the blinding a "senseless outrage" given the impossibility of a boulder on stage (176–177). See also Ussher, *Cyclops*, 188–189, 190–191 and O'Sullivan in Harrison, 146 for a contrary view.

who the monster. Other shifts in the story accomplish the same end. Not only Polyphemus' sophistic outlook, but also the great emphasis on the proper way to *cook* human flesh (241–249, 356–360, etc.) render him a remarkably civilized primitive, a confusion that develops the anomalous picture of the monster, described as a beast, or *ther* (442, 602, 658), taking his dogs out hunting (130, 330).[97] Similarly, the Cyclops' newly introduced desire to share his wine in a proper *komos* (508, 537) forces Odysseus into the very un-Greek opinion that it is better to drink alone (530–538). One might add, incidentally, that if, as lines 145–148 may suggest, the wineskin is magic and refills itself (an effect easily acted out on stage), Odysseus' reasoning becomes even more perverse.[98] Silenus may (comically) want to keep an inexhaustible wineskin all to himself, but such stinginess does not suit a Homeric hero.

Satyr drama often worked through plots that pitted the human and heroic against the monstrous: Heracles against Busirus (Euripides' *Busirus*), Theseus against Cercyon (Aeschylus' *Cercyon*), Pollux against Amycus (Sophocles' *Amycus*). Euripides uses the same convention in the *Cyclops*, but he uses it against itself.[99] By revealing the fissures created when epic is made into drama, and by leaving Odysseus with no real necessity to confront, Euripides opens up the question of whether the real monster is Polyphemus, now a civilized, if confused, antinomian, or Odysseus, revealed as his usual fifth-century sophistical self.[100]

It is unclear when the *Cyclops* was produced, although the numerous references to Sicily suggest the Athenian expeditions of either 427–424 or 415–413. In either period it is not difficult to find Euripidean tragedies, such as the *Hecuba* of 424 or the *Helen* of 412, that play, as the *Cyclops* does, with theatrical reality and the nature of heroism. If, for example, as has been suggested, the *Cyclops*

97 In contrast, of course, Homer's Cyclops eats his meat (properly) raw. Ussher, *Cyclops*, 59 points out that the Cyclops, introduced as hunting beasts, is described by Odysseus as himself a beast (*ther*) at 442, 602. The confusion is amplified when the satyrs, called *theres* at 625, call the Cyclops *ther* at 658.

98 For the refilling wineskin see Seaford, *Cyclops*, 130.

99 See W.G. Arnott in Hanslik et al. 26, with other examples of self-parody and play with convention.

100 Rothwell, 2007, 99–100; Seaford, *Cyclops*, 51–57; Arrowsmith, 1956, 2–8; Worman, 2002. For Odysseus as heroic and the Cyclops as not sophistic, O'Sullivan and Collard, *Satyric Drama*, 44–57; Marshall and O'Sullivan, both in Harrison, and as not to be pitied, Konstan in Winkler and Zeitlin, 221 n. 32. I would argue rather that Euripides employs, to his own ends, the sentiment Homer momentarily evokes in Polyphemus' appeal to his ram (9.447–460).

concluded a trilogy that included the *Hecuba*, the play would have reflected the themes of at least one tragedy in the trilogy.[101] In both the *Cyclops* and the *Hecuba*, *nomos* appears as largely a self-serving delusion. In both plays, a blinding, which on the surface is purely justified revenge, takes on deeply disquieting undertones (as in the description of Hecuba's women fondling the young children they are about to kill, 1157–1159). And in both plays, the stark contrast of announced principle against self-evident expediency finds its center in Odysseus. If, in the *Cyclops*, satyr drama has taken on a cynical mode, it may be because, as in the *Hecuba*, it is a cynical vision that it is answering. Satyr drama was to the tragic trilogy, as Yeats phrased it, a "counter-truth." For Euripides it may have just been a counter-truth that fit his own particular form of tragedy.[102]

Given the character of Euripides' tragedies, it is not too surprising that his satyr drama would be innovative. Euripides' *Alcestis*, after all, is the only certain case of a fourth-place play that did not include satyrs at all. Interestingly, something of the same tendency is observable in the *Cyclops*. As Euripides' experiments with the mismatch between Homer and the conventions of the Athenian stage become more extreme, the focus of the play moves from the contrast of satyrs and heroes to a contrast of myth and the representation of myth, to the extent that (as is not uncommon in comedy) as major a figure as Silenus can simply disappear half way through the play. The play's interest is thus no longer the conflicting worlds characteristic of satyr drama, but rather the ability of words to create whatever reality they please. In other words, once again, Euripides has moved into the region of comedy.

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101 See Sutton, 1974, 1971, 58–60 and in Easterling and Knox, 97–98; Zeitlin, 1996, 172–218; Ussher, *Cyclops*, 194. Seaford, *Cyclops*, 55 dates the play to sometime after 411, probably 408, as also C.W. Marshall, 2001. We should, however, remain alive to the danger of wishful thinking in finding that our only complete satyr drama accompanied another extant play.

102 Yeats, "The Circus Animals' Desertion" 17. See W.G. Arnott, in Hanslik, et al., 21–30 for the cynicism of *Cyclops* in other Euripidean plays. Scodel, 1980, 129–131 sees the *Sisyphus* as completing the Trojan Trilogy in just this way with the result "close to a vision of chaos" (137).

CHAPTER 3

The *Acharnians* and the Paradox of the City

—A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.
—By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

JOYCE, *Ulysses*

∵

1 Tragedy, Comedy, and Politics

As we will see, Aristophanes' *Acharnians* takes a view of the city not unlike that of Leopold Bloom, above. A *polis* is basically a number of people who say they are a *polis*. By logical extension, it can also be a single person who claims to be a *polis*. Faced in the *Acharnians* with a city that sacrifices its citizens to a senseless war, Dikaiopolis, in a pattern that remains fairly consistent in Aristophanes, has a "big idea" that he pursues regardless of its irrationality.[1] Here the idea is to conclude his own individual peace with Sparta and thereby, essentially, become his own city. The chorus, made up of the Acharnians who, historically, had most reason to hate the Spartans, and did so, finally see that, rather than betraying his city, Dikaiopolis has taken the only reasonable course. But while they celebrate his peace, they do not share in it. In a pattern we saw in Chapter One while looking at the chorus, although the second half of the play belongs entirely to the hero, the question raised by his antagonism to the chorus, here about what it means to be a citizen, will remain.

In contrast, the city in tragedy, whether, as in the *Oresteia*, it is seen as a fundamental element of the divine order, or, as in the *Bacchae*, as in conflict with it, is a much less arbitrary place. Above all the *polis* in tragedy is not, as it is in Aristophanes, merely a fabrication, created from the largely irrational needs of human beings. Aristophanes sets his own view in the *Acharnians* against that

1 See McLeish, 1980, 67–78 for Aristophanes' basic alienated hero, "big idea" and upside-down world.

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of tragedy by casting his hero, and implicitly himself, as the Euripidean tragic hero Telephus. While this scene has often been read as implying that comedy must pretend to be tragedy to be listened to, in fact the scene emphasizes all the hallmarks of comedy, such as the focus on costume, disguise, and appearances that we observed in Chapter One. This does not mean, as will become evident when we consider the *Frogs*, that Aristophanes sees tragedy as unimportant to the city. On the contrary, tragedy is necessary because the citizens must take the city, and their roles within it, seriously. And comedy is necessary because to the comic poet the city is also an unstable and inherently contradictory human creation, which only comedy is able to deal with.

First, however, another contrast needs to be considered: the sense in which both tragedy and comedy, each in its own way, can be said to be political. That Athenian Old Comedy, despite its abiding interest in the natural pursuits of food, drink, and sex, is about human beings as they live in communities is particularly clear in the case of Aristophanes.[2] It is so clear, in fact, that it has given rise to an extensive debate over whether Aristophanes deliberately supports a particular political agenda or not.[3] For my part, as Aristophanes

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2 According to Dionysios of Halicarnassus (*Art of Rhetoric*, 8.11), "About comedy, that it is political in its drama and philosophical, at least that of Cratinus, Aristophanes and Eupolis, goes without saying." Common comic topics, such as the Sophists or tragedy, also concerned the *polis* (as Carey in Harvey and Wilkins, 419–438). Storey, 2003, 40–41 sees "typical" Old Comedy as political, personally abusive and interested in philosophy, and see 4–5 for Eupolis as a political playwright. Against Sidwell, 247–258, who argues that Aristophanes' political comedy was only one form, Harvey (both in Harvey and Wilkins) argues for a common comic repertoire. Zimmermann in Kozak and Rich, who sees Aristophanes as "political" in being concerned with the *polis*, and Slater, 2002, who views his metatheater as teaching the *polis* to look beneath the surfaces, come closest to the view here.

3 For the extensive bibliography see Goldhill, 1991, 188; Bremer in Bremer and Handley, 128–129. Storey, 2003, 338–348 summarizes and sees Eupolis as somewhat more inclined to social humor. For the debate see Forrest, 1963 and in Cropp et al., 1986; Bremer in Bremer and Handley, 125–165. M. Vickers, 1997 maintains an extreme position, seeing the comedies as political allegories.

For Aristophanes as actively engaged and conservative see Rosenbloom, 2002, with 285 n. 16 for a bibliography; Henderson, 255–274 in Boedecker and Raaflaub and 271–313 in Winkler and Zeitlin; MacDowell, 1983; Ste. Croix, 1972; Kraus, 1985; Edmunds, 1987, 59–66; Konstan, 1995; Cartledge, 1990. For Aristophanes as not political, Forrest, 1963; Gomme, 1938; Whitman, 1964, 4–6; Bowie, 1982; Halliwell, 1984b, 20 and 1998, xliii; Heath, 1987b and in Dobrov, 1997, 230–249; Goldhill, 1991, 188–201; Carey, 1993. See also Silk, 2000, 301–311 opposing both Heath and Henderson. Ehrenberg, 1962, 8 has an intermediate position: "It has rightly been observed that the very fact of his being a comedian compelled the poet to be 'against the government'—whatever government it might be." See also Carey

claims to position himself directly in the fray, I suspect that he does. This level of interest in the *polis* is not, however, my concern here. What I am examining instead is how Aristophanes' political engagement, on a deeper level, is also an engagement with the nature of the *polis* itself. The difference is apparent in a joke made by James Farley, FDR's campaign manager, on Alf Landon's loss. When he parodied the truism "As Maine goes, so goes the nation" with the remark that "As Maine goes, so goes Vermont," the immediate joke was on the inflated hopes of the Republican Party in 1936. On another level, however, the joke was on the pretensions of any group that believes its own narrow outlook can represent a country. Similarly, when in the *Knights* Aristophanes depicts Cleon as a slave who controls Demos ("Mr. People"), his master, the immediate point concerns who should lead the Athenian Assembly of 424. The broader point is evident to anyone who has observed an ostensibly democratic election.

Whether we choose to see it as "political" in the modern sense or not, Aristophanic comedy directly addressed itself to the concerns of the *polis*. It was also quite specific about the *polis* that it meant—precisely the one that the audience saw in looking around at themselves. With tragedy the case was different. The current interest in tragedy as part of an overtly political festival properly emphasizes the context within which Greek drama was viewed. But, as I argue, a preeminent part of that context is the fact that tragedy and comedy shared a single stage. Just as the metatheatrical elements of Greek tragedy, which certainly exist, are far less notable when placed next to Aristophanes, so too are the political references. Above all what the juxtaposition brings out is the importance of the mythic filter through which Athenian tragedy viewed the contemporary world.[4] In an extreme case of contemporary reference, for example, most scholars see a reference to the Athenian campaigns against Melos and Sicily in Euripides' *Trojan Women*. Next to the *Birds*' single, brutal,

in Osborn and Hornblower for comic ambivalence working with political democracy. As Gomme, 1938, 97–109, I see no necessary conflict between being an artist and being involved in politics.

4 Redfield, 1962, 110: "Tragedy is supposed to transcend the particular historical situation of the city; if a tragic competition is a debate, it is a debate about universals. The formal, traditional style of the plays and the special poetic language in which they are written help to free them from any special setting; the world of the myths is not that of any particular period; it is, in a way, the real world of all periods"; Meier, 1993, 4–5; Ruffell in Carter, 293–296 on the chorus. Zimmermann in Kozak and Rich, 6 looks at the genres' use of opposite but complementary distancing devices; Martin in McDonald and Walton, 47–49 at both genres' concern with rhetorical politics.

and unfiltered proposal to cause a "Melian famine" (186) however, what is striking is that Euripides' reference serves, at most, as a subtext to the play.[5]

Although subtext matters, so too do the explicit conventions of a genre. The search for nuance should not lead us to forget the obvious. Tragedy presents itself as removed from contemporary politics, a removal that would be even more striking when tragedy was presented, as it was in the Athenian dramatic festivals, side by side with comedy.[6] As a fifth-century genre, tragedy of course addressed questions of interest to fifth-century Athenians. But this does not mean that tragedy used myth merely as a covert way to depict modern-day Athens.[7] If, as I argue, tragedy and comedy developed in conscious opposition to each other, a basic feature of the development was that while tragedy came to view "the political" through a mythic lens and used current issues, when it

5 For the *Trojan Women* see Conacher, 1967, 136; Cartledge in Easterling, 31; Romer, 1994, who focuses on this aspect and Carter, 2007, 131–134 for a summary of the play and Melos. Kip, 1987 disputes the chronology, and Knox in Easterling and Knox, 82, the reference, citing l. 209, the praise of Athens. For other Euripidean contemporary reference see Podlecki, 1970, 417–418 on the *Helen*; Sutton, 1987, 113: "the *Palamedes* was written to rebuke the Athenians for the condemnation of Protagoras no less than the *Troades* was meant to criticize their handling of the Melian incident" and the following discussion of the *Telephus*.

6 Easterling, 1985 and in Pelling, 1997, 24–25 sees "a shared imaginative world which was firmly linked with both past and present but strictly represented neither and could be constantly redefined." Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003, 15–50 and 1989, 136 sees tragedy as addressing the universal and manipulating the symbolic distance between itself and the audience; Hesk in McDonald and Walton takes over Easterling's idea of "heroic vagueness" (84–85) to describe tragedy's "socio-political dimension" and see Scodel, 1999, 17–18.

7 For tragedy as political see A.M. Bowie in Pelling, 39–62; Podlecki, 1966a for Aeschylus; Edmunds, 1996, 87–148 for *Oedipus at Colonus*; Rose and Rosenbloom, both in Goff; Dover in Dover, 161–175; Dodds in Lloyd; Griffith, 1995 for the *Oresteia* and 1998 for tragedy overall as addressing class relations; and, at an extreme, Delebecque, 1951. Against see Griffin in Griffin, 73–94; Macleod, 1982 for a more social involvement; Goldhill in Winkler and Zeitlin, 97–129; Friedrich in Silk 261–268 for a critique and more recently, Goldhill, 2000 and Heath in Cairns. Griffin, 1998 argues vehemently against tragedy expressing a "collective voice"; Seaford, 2000 responds. For a survey and a view that tragedy (evidenced in Euripides) becomes increasingly political, Saïd in Boedecker and Raaflaub. Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 216 sums up *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* by concluding that tragedy referred to contemporary events only in exceptional cases; Carter, 2007, 21–63 provides a good survey of various positions.

Markantonatos and Zimmermann, ix–xi give a history of the debate in regard to both comedy and tragedy. For a less radical view, which sees tragedy as using the interplay of the contemporary and the mythic, see C. Segal, 1981, 3; Sommerstein, 1996b, 391–421 for Aeschylus' use of contemporary politics; Meier, 1993, 204–212 and *passim* for tragedy playing out the tension between an autarchic ideal and a need for cooperation.

used them, to this purpose, comedians such as Cratinus increasingly viewed myth as a way to comment directly on contemporary Athens.[8]

In other words, while comedy's focus is on the contemporary, although this can also imply a more general view of the *polis*, tragedy's is on the universal, although it can employ contemporary events to this end. A vivid example occurs in the *Persians*, which I will look at in Chapter Six. The play, the only surviving tragedy set in the contemporary world, concerns events that occurred only eight years before its production. But although the history is recent, it is viewed, as we will see, under the aspect of myth.[9] The *Eumenides* also, despite its Homeric setting, has an all but direct reference to Ephialtes' attack on the Areopagus and Athens's alliance with Argos in 460. In the context of the tragedy, however, as we will see, what contemporary politics refers to is nothing less than a universal shift in divine justice.[10] The same distinction is apparent, as we see in Chapter Five, in the *Oedipus Tyrannos*. While Sophocles may well allude to Pericles and the plague in reference to Oedipus, it would be, putting it mildly, overkill to create the character of Oedipus solely to make a point about Pericles.[11]

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8 As the *Dionysalexandros* hypothesis: "In the play Pericles is quite convincingly satirized through suggestion (*di' emphaseos*) as having brought war on the Athenians" (4.140.44–48; Rusten, 2011, 182–183), and similarly the *Thracian Women*, *Nemesis*, and *Wealth-gods*, for which see Bakola 180–229. Norwood, 1931, 122–124 sees the satire as only an undertone, and see also Luppe, 1966, 182–184. Henderson, 2013 argues that the politicization of comedy corresponds to periods of intense democratic activity, as was the case in the early fifth century, when comedy and tragedy were developing their relation.

9 Goldhill, 1988, 189: "The narrative, moreover, as various critics have pointed out, is specifically 'theological,' that is, the events of the recent past are seen in terms of divine causation, a divine punishment"; Rosenbloom, 2006, 80: "History assumes the form of myth in tragedy because what is alien somehow becomes one's own and the particular gains a general resonance."

10 On the Areopagus see Samons, 1999; Winnington-Ingram in Easterling and Knox, 31 on Aeschylus' treatment of history as myth; Meier, 102–136 on the *Oresteia* as about the need to integrate old and new rather than a particular political issue. More generally see Podlecki, 1966a; Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 25–32 and 1996, 392–402; Conacher, 1987, 195–206; Goldhill, 2000, 47–52 and Carter, 2007, 58–63 for a summary. The absence of a king in heroic Athens blurs the line between mythic and contemporary (Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 132; Hall in Easterling 1997, 102) as does the location of Agamemnon's palace in Argos (Macleod, 1982 gives possible non-political reasons).

11 In contrast, the *Knights*' Paphlagon is created purely to reflect on Cleon. See Eherenberg, 1954 and Redfield in Winkler and Zeitlin, 325: "Oidipous in the *Tyrannos* is like Perikles … not, however, because Sophokles intended a point about Perikles, but rather (I am suggesting) because he relied on his audience's understanding of Perikles to create for

These tendencies incline comedy and tragedy to very different views of the *polis*. Its conventional mythic filter gives tragedy the option of viewing the city *sub specie aeternitatis* and so connecting it to an absolute necessity.[12] For comedy, which came to deal largely with the contemporary city, the *polis* is much more likely to appear a purely human construction. The humor of juxtaposing these two views, from the point of view of comedy, lies in the idea of an absolute need to obey a necessity that human beings have invented for themselves.

Before turning to the *Acharnians* and comedy's view of the city, I consider here, for the contrast, two tragedies, the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae*, the first arguably the most influential of Greek tragedies, the second nearly the last tragedy we possess.[13] The two plays also lie at opposite extremes of the ways in which tragedy may portray the *polis*. In the *Oresteia*, the city is a fundamental part of the cosmos. In the *Bacchae*, the political is challenged, and devastated, by Dionysus. But in both, in contrast to the *Acharnians*' location of the city squarely within the world of contingency, the city is involved in a necessity that lies well beyond the political.

This, I would argue, represents an overall tendency. The city can play many roles in tragedy. It may set off the hero, as in the *Seven against Thebes*—"The city

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them a believable Oidipous." Similarly, Evans, 1991 on the *Ajax* and Cimon and Boedecker, 1991 on the *Medea* and the breakdown of language: "To "decode" the *Medea* as a simply political allegory would be a ludicrous oversimplification" (111). P.D. Arnott, 1989, 159–160 sees anachronism as establishing a connection with the audience; Kiso, 1984, 110–115 explores topicality in Sophocles' later plays. Knox, 1957 on Oedipus' "tyranny" as addressing Athens's lies on the edge of this idea.

12 As Macleod, 1982, 167: "I would strongly maintain that Greek tragedy is through and through political, in the sense that it is much concerned with the life of men and women within society, the *polis*, but that this concern does not necessarily involve any direct reference to the politicking of the Athenian audience at any one particular time." See also Taplin, 1986, 167 and Goldhill and Hall in Goldhill and Hall, 18–19.

13 The *Electra* (520 ff.), *Orestes* (491 ff.), and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (940 ff.) reflect the *Oresteia* directly, and see Parry in Cropp et al., 1986, 103–114 on the *Women of Trachis*; Caldwell, 1974 and Zeitlin in Pedrick and Oberhelman on *Iphigenia among the Taurians*; Zuntz, 1955, 22–25 on *Suppliant Women*; and Euben, 1990, 49, 134–135 on the *Bacchae*. Taplin, 2007, 19, and see 49 ff., points out that fully half of the tragedy-related Paestan vases refer to the *Oresteia*. For restaging of Aeschylus see Chapter Seven; Dover, *Frogs*, 23; Newiger, 1961 and for a different view, Biles, 2006–2007. Although Hutchinson, *Seven against Thebes*, xlii–iii argues that there were no revivals until 386, when one old play was performed at each festival (*TrGF* Did A 1.201), the four posthumous victories of Aeschylus' sons cannot explain the continual reference to his work or *Acharn.* 10, *Frogs* 86. See Becker, 1915 for Aeschylus' importance in Aristophanes.

is saved, but of the two twin princes / the blood has stained the earth in each other's murder" (820–821)—or reflect him, as in the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, where, as Knox has argued, Athens, like Oedipus, is meant to see that meaning is not humanly determined.[14] Or, as famously in the *Antigone*, the city may serve as one of two poles in tension with each other. Or, as in the *Trojan Women*, the fall of the city may sum up the individual tragedies of its inhabitants. In each of these cases, however, as in the *Oresteia* and *Bacchae* (and as is, I would argue, the general tendency of tragedy), the city is seen as part of a fundamental reality not simply under the control of human beings.

2 The *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae*: The City in a Greater Whole

2.1 *The* Oresteia*: The Divine, the Human, and the City*

While comedy plays with our deep-seated, if unstated, belief that our own concerns are all that really exist, tragedy, as in *Oedipus Tyrannos* or *King Lear*, often awakes a suspicion that in the eyes of the cosmos human hopes and fears are inconsequential.[15] The *Oresteia* is an exception to this rule. The trilogy depicts the same drama occurring on three different levels simultaneously, on the level of the individual characters, on the level of the city, and on the level of the gods.[16] In terms of individuals, the tension between Clytemnestra and

14 Knox, 1998.

15 As Dodds, 1966, 48 on *Oedipus Tyrannos*: "If everyman could tear away the last veils of illusion, if he could see human life as time and the gods see it, would he not see that against that tremendous background all the generations of men are as if they had never been, *isa kai to meden zosas* (1187)?"

16 Buxton, 1984, 16: "When we describe a work as 'tragic,' one of the things we may imply is that in it human conduct is presented in counterpoint with forces beyond mankind's control. In Greek tragedy this metaphysical dimension is supplied not by fate (a concept pretty well irrelevant to Greek tragedy) but by the purposes and actions of the gods." Conacher, 1987, 5 sees the first play as working on the level of the individual, the second of the *oikos*, and the third of the gods, with the *oikos* as the transition between individual and community. Foley, 1985, 45: "in Aeschylus' *Oresteia* divine justice becomes comprehensible only through the establishment of a human institution, trial by jury, in the context of Athenian society"; Friedrich in Silk, 275: "the polis and its *dike*, its order of justice, were regarded as the manifestation of the divine and of divine *dike* in the human world." In contrast to Zeitlin, 1996, 87: "The program of the *Oresteia* is to trace the evolution of civilization by placing the *polis* at the center of its vision and endowing it with the creative power to coordinate human, natural, and divine forces" I would argue that Aeschylus sees the *polis* not as coordinating order, but as an integral element within it. See Goldhill,

Agamemnon, highlighted by the introduction of Cassandra, is played out in a different key between Electra and Orestes, highlighted by the introduction of Pylades, and then left to work itself out in the conflict within Orestes himself. Simultaneously, in terms of the city, the play examines both gender conflict and a movement from retributive to civic justice through Athena, who is herself asexual, and the creation of the Areopagus. The final conflict of the play lies in the opposition of the old gods, represented by the Furies, to the new order as it has been represented by Apollo. And as the Furies are linked to blood-ties, nature, the female, the dark earth, passion, and necessity, while Apollo is linked to the *polis*, the male, the bright sky, *logos*, and freedom, their confrontation, and Athena's final reconciliation with the Furies, sums up as well the drama of individuals and of the city, which had run throughout.[17]

One essential element in this opposition, woven through the stories of individuals, the city, and the gods, is the confrontation of freedom and necessity. This theme, brought out vividly in Agamemnon's putting on the "yoke-strap of necessity" (*Agam.* 228), continues in the Furies. Throughout they are associated with vengeance, the curse on the house (as *Agam.* 466–468, 1501–1505), and necessity. They are bloodhounds hunting Orestes down (*Eum.* 244–255) and enchanters who bind him in (*Eum.* 307 ff.) and will not let him be released (*Eum.* 174).[18] Apollo, in contrast, is associated with a release from necessity, with purification from bloodguilt and even, both through his son Asclepius and with Admetus, with an escape from the ultimate necessity, death (*Agam.* 1007–1009; *Eum.* 726–727). By making them drunk, Apollo has made even the Fates lose control (*Eum.* 730–731). He, accordingly, offers Orestes acquittal, while the Furies insist on the necessary hold that Orestes' past deed has over him.

It is often argued that what Aeschylus gives us in Orestes' release and the bringing of the Furies into Athens is the conquest of the male over the female,

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1992 for the central importance of the *polis* in the drama and Sommerstein, 1996b, 273–288, 383–390 for its "evolutionary theology." Hall in Sommerstein et al., 265 examines the *Orestes*' use of the *Oresteia*, but within a fragmented Empedoclean universe: "The domestic and political conflicts and their resolutions are universalized by a version of the pathetic fallacy: it is implied that they are reflected in, even caused by, analogous processes taking place simultaneously in the cosmic order."

17 For these oppositions see Zeitlin, 1996, 112. As Revermann in Revermann and Wilson, 248 points out, Aeschylus tends to use the word *thesmos* rather than *nomos* in the *Eumenides* (as 391, 484, 490 f., 571, 615), further anchoring the play's themes in the divine.

18 See also Prins, 1991 for *logos* itself binding Orestes. For nets in the trilogy Conacher, 1987, 17–18; Lebeck, 1971, 15–16, 63–68, 132; for hunting Vidal-Naquet in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 141–160; Goldhill, 1992, 70–72.

the political over the natural, and of freedom over necessity.[19] I believe instead, as I will outline, that the play shows us the city, through the institution of civic justice, employing necessity as a force that fosters human life.[20] Rather than subordinating the female and the necessity implicit in nature, the play reveals the need the city has for them. It may even be, as Oliver Taplin has argued, that tragedy itself reflects the role that the Furies play in the *polis*.[21] But however we see the play's resolution, as representing Athena's victory over the Furies or as representing her recognition of their importance, the integral involvement of the city in the greater order of the cosmos is clear.

The case has been made before that the ending of the *Oresteia* depicts not the suppression of the Furies but rather their importance to the city.[22] Athena's own comments suggest this by echoing two of the Furies' most critical statements: first, that there is a place where terror is good (*Eum.* 520–527, 701–702), and second, that the city must shun both anarchy and tyranny, the extremes of freedom and necessity (*Eum.* 529–534, 699–700).[23] It is for this reason, it has been argued, that Aeschylus has the result be a tied vote, a fact that Athena cites as evidence that the Furies have not been defeated (798–799).[24] Similarly, for this reason, the trilogy ends not with the acquittal of

19 As Thomson, *Oresteia*, vol. 1, 51ff.; Zeitlin, 1996, 87–122; Winnington-Ingram, 1948. See Conacher, 1987, 169–174 for the "conversion" of the Erinyes and 206–212 for a summary of other views. Goldhill, 1986, 33ff., 153 cites Athena's "appropriation" of the Furies and the "resolution" of *dike* and patriarchy while in 1989, 280–283 and 1992 he argues for neither conclusion, but rather dialectical contraries.

20 As the trilogy is closely interconnected, for convenience I also refer to it as simply a "play."

21 Taplin in Silk, 197–198 and Wilson and Taplin, 1993.

22 See Lebeck, 1971, 128; Euben, 1990, 75–83; Jones, 1962, 137. Gagarin, 1976, 105 sees harmony established in the gender conflict; and see Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 19–25 and 1996, 432: "Aeschylus, particularly in the *Oresteia*, has been interpreted by some recent critics as affirming and validating the androcentric order, and by others as questioning it. It is perhaps more accurate to regard him as taking it fundamentally for granted (as everyone else did) while emphasizing, in common with other tragic poets, that within it women had a legitimate status of their own which must not be infringed."

23 See Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 22 and 215–218 for the difficulties in Athena's speech and Rehm, 1994, 108 for the growing similarity between Athena and the Furies. Conacher, 1987, 169–170 sees the echo as ironic; Lloyd-Jones, 1971, 94ff. and Gagarin, 1976, 79ff. take the similarity to indicate that there is no change in the vision of justice, which makes it unclear why the Areopagus was needed at all.

24 Thomson, *Oresteia*, 1. 2, 299 points out that had Athena made the votes equal by adding her own this would be adding insult to injury. See Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 221–226; Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 48–49 and *contra* Vernant, Seaford in Goff, 209–

Orestes, but with Athena persuading the Furies to become part of Athens. This scene takes up the last third of the play, provides a new and final climax after Orestes' departure, and eclipses Apollo so completely that his exit is not even marked.[25] The effect is not to validate the victory of Orestes and Apollo, but rather to balance their victory by stressing the equal importance of the Furies.

The view that the *Oresteia* depicts the conquest of the old gods by the new, and so of necessity by freedom, relies on the idea that when the Furies are accepted into Athens they are transformed and subordinated.[26] There is, however, little sign of this in the play. When Athena welcomes the Furies into the city, for example, it is their terrible power that she stresses:

> Everything that concerns the human these ones
> have as their place to dispense.
> And whoever falls in with these grievous ones,[27]
> he knows not whence come the blows of his life,
> for the sins of those gone before
> call him to these goddesses, and silently destruction,
> for all his great boasting,
> with hateful wrath grinds him into dust.
>
> 932–938

Similarly, the commonplace that the Furies are renamed Eumenides, or "Well-minded Ones," which implies a transformation, has no basis in the text.[28]

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212. Conacher, 1987, 164–166 discusses, with further references, the problems involved in the voting.

25 Taplin, 1977, 403–407 remarks on Apollo's extraordinary exit, commenting, 407–410, that Orestes' departure reverses the usual pattern, in which the suppliant is made part of the city and the pursuer sent away, a change that further emphasizes the Furies' inclusion.

26 For example, Gagarin, 1976, 85–86: "The Furies change from spirits of evil and destruction, which they are during most of the *Eumenides* (and even from the beginning of the trilogy; cf. *Ag.* 59), into beneficent spirits of fertility at the end." For a summary see Easterling in Revermann and Wilson, 219–236, with 232 citing Bacon, 2001, 57–58: "It is a change not of identity but of status." See also Ewans, 1995, 220: "The Furies do not change their powers or their nature" and Burian, 2003, 20–21 qualifying the idea of "transformation."

27 Reading *mēn* (as Linwood) with Page, Teubner and Sommerstein, not the manuscript's *mē*. Reading *mē* Weir Smith translates: "Yet he who hath not found them grievous, he knoweth not whence come the blows of life."

28 Zeitlin 1965, 507: "In their new role as Eumenides …" and 1996, 107: "the transformation of the Erinyes into Eumenides (Gracious Ones)"; Gagarin, 1976, 86: "The Furies, hideous at first, don the crimson robes of the metics for the final procession and are addressed

Although the name "Eumenides" provides the play's traditional title, it appears nowhere in the trilogy, nor is any renaming or transformation ever described.[29] The first of Athena's two references to the Furies as "kindly-minded" (*euphrones*) makes it clear, moreover, that it is not because of any change in the Furies' nature, but rather because of the respect of the citizens, that they will benefit the city:

> From the terror of their faces
> I see great gain for these my citizens.
> For these will be kindly-minded (*euphrones*) if always
>   kindly-minded (*euphronas*) yourselves
> you honor them greatly, so that your land and city
>   conducted with straight justice
> in all ways will shine out.
>   990–995, and see 1030

As Athena's description indicates, the Furies will be beneficial to Athens if they are respected, and as her reminder of the importance of justice points out, the critical way in which the city respects the Furies is by maintaining justice, now through the court that she has established, where "the reverence / of the citizens, and inborn fear, will hold them / from injustice" (690–692). The gift the Furies promise, fertility, is, moreover, the traditional result of a city's respect for justice, an association that goes back as far as Homer and Hesiod (*Odyssey* 109 ff., *WD* 225–247) and that appears in reverse in the plague and barrenness that afflict cities that harbor pollution, as in the *Oedipus Tyrannos*.[30] The

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by their new name, Eumenides ("Kindly Ones")"; Rehm, 1994, 107: "The metamorphosis to Eumenides"; Lloyd-Jones, 1971, 94: "When the Erinyes become Eumenides …". Conacher, 1987, 174 refers to "Erinyes / Eumenides" and see 212: "Only by Athena's persuasion and bribery is the female element (as represented by the Furies) turned to Kindly Ones"; also Herington, 1985, 155; Goldhill, 1984, 271; Lebeck, 1971, 131; Seaford, 1994, 96; Frontisi-Ducroux in Kraus et al., 176.

29 See Hall, 2010, 224 on the lines renaming the goddesses dropping out of the text, and Brown, 1984 and Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 11–12 for the absence of any reference to "Eumenides." Parker (1996, 298–299 and in Griffith et al., 2009, 145–151) suggests the Furies, addressed as *Semnai*, or "Venerable Ones" (1040–1041), echo the *Semnai Theai* and sees both groups as "double-sided," with the power to both destroy and foster. The reference seems to be a genuine euphemism (as at 1035, 1038) which, like the use of "the Lord" for YHWH, acknowledges a being's power rather than implying a change. See Griffith in Enright, 1985, 32; Allen and Burridge, 3.

30 Stanford, *Odyssey* 2.319–320; Fletcher, 2012, 62–66; Mikalson, 1991, 54–55; Goheen, 1955, 136:

introduction of civic justice has not removed necessity from the city, but rather joined it with the citizens' freedom to direct themselves, within a movement that has cosmic implications.

The combination of necessity and freedom appears in its most universal form in the trilogy's last lines, where the reconciliation of Athena and the Furies becomes also a joining together of Zeus, father of Apollo and Athena, and the Fates, born parthenogenetically from Night, and "full-sisters" (961–962) to the Furies:[31]

> May peace, to all future time, with the homes' lighted torches
> be with the people of Pallas' city. Thus Zeus who sees all
> and Fate walks together.
> Raise now the cry in answer to song![32]
> 1044–1047

Zeus and Fate are together the subject of a singular verb *sunkateba*, "walks together." The implication is not that one dominates the other, but that they have achieved a balance that makes them two elements of a single whole.[33] Through Athena's foundation of civic justice, it is a balance in which the Athens that the theatergoers currently inhabit takes part.

2.2 *The* Bacchae*: The God's Challenge to Thebes*

In contrast to the comic city, which, as essentially contingent, is free to be whatever it likes, the *Oresteia* sees the city's fundamental importance in its ability to balance necessity and freedom through the institution of civic justice. In the

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"the Furies are, as Clytemnestra too has been, agents both of fecundity and destruction" and B. Vickers, 1973, 421: "Because the Erinyes are chthonic deities they can promote fertility; they can also withhold it."

31 Despite Apollo's argument that the father is the sole parent, Hesiod, who is closely followed by Aeschylus, describes the Fates as having only a mother (*Th.* 211–220). Lebeck, 1971, 127 notes that the Furies have no father (ll. 321–322) and Loraux, 1984, 123 that Athena does have a mother, Metis, as Hesiod *Theogony* 886 ff. See Hall, 2010, 222–223 for the Athenian law forbidding half-siblings by the mother, but not by the father, to marry, revealing that "the blood bond that united mother and child was a deeply felt and obvious fact of life."

32 Following Page's text. Line 1044 is corrupt.

33 As Sommerstein, *Eumenides*, 285–286. See Lloyd-Jones, 1971, 92 ff. for Zeus and Fate as a reflection of the city and the Furies coming together, and Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 48–49, n. 3 on the Furies' continuing terror and a resulting balance of tensions. For a "fusion of opposites" in Aeschylus (following Pythagoras) see Thomson, *Oresteia*, 1.5–6, and 11 for the fusion expressed within the city in tragedy.

Bacchae, in a very different view of the *polis*, it is Dionysus who contains both freedom and necessity, as he shows in his ability to turn both against the city. Although it may seem paradoxical to establish the city's importance through its defeat, the theme of the *Bacchae* is the power of Dionysus, which emerges not in destroying merely human beings, such as Pentheus, Cadmus, or Agave, nor in challenging an arbitrary human construction, but in the devastation of that which Pentheus attempts to uphold with such determination, the city as the fundamental locus of human life.[34]

While the *Oresteia* establishes the *polis* as the middle term between the individual and the cosmos, the *Bacchae* challenges the city by establishing the wilderness, an anti-city, as the place of Dionysus.[35] This opposition is linked to an opposition of Greece to the barbarian places from which Dionysus and his chorus arrive (56, 64–65), as we see in Pentheus' upholding of civilization against the wilderness (216–220, 503, 961–962) and of Greece against the barbarian (483, 778–779). Where the barbarian and the wild overlap is in their antagonism to the essentially Greek institution of the *polis*. Thus Dionysus makes it clear that while he has come to avenge himself on the house of Cadmus, his most fundamental aim is the city itself: "For this city must learn to the full, even if unwilling, / being uninitiated in my bacchic rites" (39–40, and see 47–48, 50–52). And as he tells Pentheus, as he leads him to destruction: "Alone you are the one, for the sake of this *polis*, alone, who takes on this labor / therefore the necessary contests await" (963–964).

The play is thus a contest between Pentheus and the city and Dionysus and the force of wild nature, epitomized (as in both satyr play and comedy) in

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34 Although the reading developed here disagrees with Seaford, who sees Pentheus' destruction as saving the city, both readings see the *polis* as central to the play. The fundamental question is how the city can incorporate the greater necessity of Dionysus, as Goldhill, 1986, 266: "Dionysus works to invert the oppositions by which the city defines itself … bringing the city face to face with a sense of the other." In any case Seaford is clearly right that while the royal house may be destroyed, the devastation to the city must be understood as only temporary, until it is willing to incorporate the god. See Seaford, 1994, 311–318 and *Bacchae*, 44–52; Friedrich's critique and Seaford's response in Silk, 1996, 257–283, 284–294. See also Scullion, 2002; Friedrich, 2000; Seaford's reply, 2000b; C. Segal, 1997, 380–393 and Foley, 1985, 211: "The king's body is pitifully reconstructed, then apparently left unburied on stage by his family without a hint of future regeneration or rebirth for the city" and for a contrast of the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae* in terms of ritual.

35 For wilderness and city as opposed and yet (ultimately) mutually dependent see Thumiger, 2007, 146–148; Winnington-Ingram, 1997 and C. Segal, 1997, 78–124 and 135, 331 for the parallel opposition and fusing of Pentheus and Dionysus, which will result in Pentheus' destruction.

dance, intoxication, and (in Pentheus' mind at any rate) sex.[36] In this contest it is clear that the city, like Pentheus' stables, cannot hope to contain the god. Above all the god's opposition to the city appears in Euripides' extraordinary use of the chorus. The *Bacchae* is nearly unique in extant tragedy in having a chorus that is actively opposed both to the tragic hero and to his city, as their declaration on hearing of Pentheus' destruction—"Dionysus, Dionysus, not Thebes, has power over me" (1037–1038)—makes brutally clear.[37] It has been argued that tragedy used the contrast of actors, who were professionals, to a chorus made up of citizens to reflect a tension between the tragic hero and the *polis*. If so, the *Bacchae* has reversed the equation. The chorus here stands explicitly against the city.

Nor can the tension between the wild and the city, a tension often maintained in tragedy, hold. Rather, as prefigured in Dionysus' toppling of the palace, the wild is triumphant and the civilized destroyed. This triumph appears in the action of the play, in the constant references to Actaeon, torn to pieces by his own hunting dogs (230, 337, 1227, 1291), in the play's final exile of Cadmus, and in the transformation of the roots of the house, Cadmus and his wife Harmonia, into snakes (1330–1336). Similarly, elements in the play that have often been seen as comic, such as Cadmus and Teiresias' feeble attempt to be baccants or Teiresias' sophistic justifications of myth, serve not to balance the forces of the play, by, for example, undermining the seriousness of Dionysus, but rather reveal the futility of any attempt to tame the wild.[38] One of Euripides' most blatant ventures into the realm of comedy, the cross-dressing of Pentheus, serves a similar function. Like disguise in comedy, the cross-dressing helps to

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36 See 773–774 and Seaford, *Bacchae* on 771–774. Winnington-Ingram, 1997 comments on Pentheus' obsession with sex and discusses the threat of Dionysus' nonrational forces.

37 Segal in Edmunds and Wallace, 65: "The city reflected in the *Bacchae* has no communal center because there is no chorus of citizens who can speak as a community of involved fellow citizens"; Gentili, 126, in the same volume and Hall, 2010, 30: "In the majority of the plays, the chorus 'belongs' to the space where the action occurs: they are inhabitants of the town where the tragic family resides." In *Libation Bearers*, for example, the chorus opposes Clytemnestra and Aegisthus but support Orestes, the rightful heir.

38 Seidensticker, 1982, 116–123 and 1978; Dobrov, 2001, 78–84. Euben, 1990, 154 points out the ultimately tragic effect, as Halliwell, 2008, 139: "One of the supreme, perpetually challenging paradoxes of the play is that Euripides has superimposed the body language of laughter, divine as well as human, onto the bleakest face of tragedy." Seaford, *Bacchae*, 166–167 and Donzelli in Medda et al. disagree. See Mastronarde in Cropp et al., 1986, 206–207; Ostwald in Breyfogle, 42–44 for Teiresias and Prodicus' denial of the conventional gods, and for the "dry, abstract tone" and Mastronarde, 2010, 173, 219–220 for a more sympathetic view.

undermine conventional human determinations of identity. Unlike in comedy however, where the focus is purely human, here the cross-dressing points to a far more powerful and absolute ambiguity, embodied in Dionysus.

The contest of Dionysus and the city is also a zero-sum game in regard to freedom and necessity. Just as the *Bacchae* seems to take over both the necessity usually associated with tragedy and the freedom associated with comedy, Dionysus' position as the source of both freedom and necessity leaves no place for a possible balance between Dionysus and Pentheus.[39] The vivid initial scenes in which Pentheus tries to bind the god show us Dionysus as an embodiment of freedom, an association emphasized by the chorus and the messenger's reminders of the mountain, the location of freedom and the polar opposite of the city. At the same time, however, Dionysus' role as enchanter (234) and Pentheus' infatuation (912 ff.) show us the god as also embodying necessity, a necessity fulfilled in the transformation of the bacchants from hunted to hunters and Pentheus' transformation, like Actaeon's, from hunter to prey (848, 866–876, 977–980).

It is also here that we see how necessity and freedom have joined. Dionysus' initial description of Autonoe, Agave, and Ino stresses the necessity of his rites:

> Therefore I myself have stung them from their homes
> in madness, and they dwell on the mountain with wits deranged.
> And I compelled them (*anankas'*) to wear the attire of my rites
> and all the female seed of Cadmus' people, all the women that were,
> I drove mad from their homes.
>
> 32–36

In Pentheus' attraction to the rites, however, another side of Dionysus appears. As many scholars have pointed out, the forces driving Pentheus to the mountain are as much a reflection of something suppressed inside himself as they are a product of Dionysus' control.[40] In the critical scene Dionysus seduces, rather than compels Pentheus, a process already observed as each of the characters of the play—Teiresias and Cadmus, the servant, and the messenger—are, one

39 Rather than seeing themselves as representing *physis* and Pentheus as representing *nomos*, the chorus see themselves as supporting law, piety, and moderation (890–896) and Pentheus as "godless, lawless, without justice" (995, as 370–375, 386–401, 1041 etc.), as Winnington-Ingram, 1997. Dionysus' reference to a "Phrygian *polis*" (58) and the chorus's addressing Pentheus as "stranger" (*xenos* 263), the term used for Dionysus (441 etc.) make the same appropriation.

40 Thumiger, 2007, 59–65 and for the relation of Pentheus' "internal self" to his isolation.

by one, drawn to Dionysus. The necessity that Dionysus embodies is as much an internal as an external compulsion; as such it is also, from another point of view, perfect freedom.[41]

In Seaford's reading, the *Bacchae* sacrifices the royal house to Dionysus' necessity in order to give the city, in its acceptance of Dionysus, his freedom. We cannot know if this is right, since the play, as it stands, ends not with the foundation of a cult to Dionysus, but with the banishment of Cadmus and Agave. In so doing it also ends with necessity, as in Dionysus' final question—"Why then do you delay what of necessity holds?" (1351).[42] What Cadmus and Agave have gained by the advent of Dionysus is exile and the command of a barbarian army against the cities of Greece (1333–1336, 1354–1360). What they have lost, as in Agave's lament (1368–1370), is what is fundamental to human life—the *polis*.

3 The Double Vision of the *Acharnians*

> An old Maine farmer who lived just on the New Hampshire border was visited by a young man surveying the area. "Well, sir," said the young man, "I hope this isn't going to be too much of a disappointment to you, but it turns out you don't actually live in Maine at all—you live in New Hampshire." "Is that a fact?" said the farmer. "Well, I'm delighted. To tell you the truth, I don't think I could have stood another Maine winter."

If the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae* view the *polis* as a critical factor in a much greater whole, Aristophanes' view is much closer to that of the old Maine farmer above. What matters is not what a place is, but what you call it. The viewpoint grants the comic hero a gift of controlling space that extends beyond the political, the natural, and even the rational. It is a quality that appears

41 For example, Winnington-Ingram, 1997, 9: "Dionysus symbolizes the power of blind, instinctive emotion" and for the psychological realism of the play, Dodds, *Bacchae* xxxix–xlviii; Goldhill in Easterling, 340–343 for an overview and Devereux, 1970.

42 Goward, 1999, 164: "Dionysus the god revealed has none of the alluring, shape-shifting qualities of Dionysus the festival god disguised. He represents only cruel necessity."

throughout Aristophanes.[43] In the *Peace*, all that Trugaios needs to travel to Olympus, reversing Bellerophon's tragic inability to reach the gods, is the crane (173–175). In the *Birds*, a series of puns on various birds' names creates a city wall that keeps out even the gods (1125–1163). In the *Lysistrata*, not only is Lysistrata able to take over the Acropolis, a feat accomplished otherwise only by the Persians and (relevantly) the Amazons, she is also able to call a meeting that the women of Sparta, Corinth, and Boeotia attend, unhindered by war, distance, or city walls.

The greatest fantasy of space, however, and the one most strongly indicative of Aristophanes' view of the city, is Dikaiopolis'. Both in his Rural Dionysia, celebrated despite the war that the rest of the city is engaged in, and in his marketplace, which both those outside the city walls, like the Megarian and Boeotian, and those inside, like the bridesmaid, can frequent, Dikaiopolis is able to simply ignore the confines of the city.[44] This ability to control space is particularly pointed given the play's opening with the claustrophobia of being shut inside the city walls.[45] The sense of confinement that pervades the first half of the play, in Dikaiopolis' frustration with the Assembly leaders, the repression of Amphitheos, the arbitrary rules invoked to control the Assembly, and the unreasoning fury of the Acharnians (leading to yet more constraint when their coal scuttle is taken hostage), are given a vivid introduction in Dikaiopolis' opening desire to escape from the city walls (32–36). The opening must have resonated deeply with the country people in the audience—and perhaps as deeply with the city-dwellers, who would have been heartily glad to see the

43 See Revermann, 2003 and 2006, 110–111: tragedy "avoids spatio-temporal discontinuity in favor of closed, fixed, and linear chronotopes which convey a sense of tragic entrapment. Comedy, as will be seen, is biased towards the other extreme, indulging in open, fluid, and discontinuous chronotopes, while satyr play, for the little we know about this genre, is located somewhere between these two extremes." Hall, 2010, 68–69 points also to the unity of time common in tragedy and approached very differently in comedy.

44 For the similar play with space in *Lysistrata* see Vaio, 1973; in *Birds*, Dunbar, *Birds*, 16–17, and see *Clouds* 138 (and 1322) where Strepsiades, who has come from next door, says he lives "a long way off, in the country." For other considerations of the fluidity of comic vs. tragic space see von Möllendorf, 1995, 112–150; Scullion, 1994, 67, 109; Poe, 2000, 256–295; P.D. Arnott, 1989, 132–145; Lowe in Redmond, 37–42 and Wiles, 2000, 122–123 using Bakhtin's *chronotope* (Bakhtin, 1981, 84–258) to contrast tragedy's closed with comedy's open sense of time and space. In a further complication, related to the play's ambivalence, 130 lines after his return to his rural deme (33, 266–267) Dikaiopolis declares that he is from Cholleidae (406), which is in the city (Olson, *Acharn.*, 180).

45 See MacDowell, 1995, 46–48 for the historical situation and its effect on the play.

last of their rural compatriots.[46] And its point would be appreciated by all the citizens who, in 425, remained penned up by the *polis* that, theoretically, gave them their freedom.[47]

Aristophanes' use of space in the *Acharnians* also provides a significant contrast to the use of space in both the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae*. Dikaiopolis' Rural Dionysia (202 241ff.), with its celebration of all the antinomian, carnivalesque possibilities of the festival (and with a solid focus on drink and sex), sums up his revolt against the confinement of having to live within a *polis*, a confinement that has been made literal for the past six years (266) by the need to live within the city walls. The move also inverts the use of space in the *Oresteia*. The *Acharnians* suggests freedom by moving away from the immediate situation of the audience, who, it has been suggested, have just played the audience in Dikaiopolis' Assembly.[48] In contrast, the *Oresteia* moves from the Argive palace of the *Agamemnon* and the *Libation Bearers* to the *Eumenides* where, essentially, the city of Athens becomes a prop for the play. The first two plays push on the move, as the inside space of the palace is established as the place one goes to die, while the *polis* most often described is Troy, the "city made no city" (*Eum*. 457).[49] And while the change of scene to Delphi is not unexpected, the shift to Athens, a setting as unusual in Aeschylus' time as it was afterward, is.[50] By bringing Athens itself, and the Acropolis, the location of the theater, into the play, Aeschylus not only reveals the *polis* as a fundamental aspect of the cosmos, he uses the very city in which the audience is sitting to make his point.

In a stark contrast to Aeschylus, who reifies the space of the stage by relocating it and actually bringing it to where the audience is, Euripides manages,

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46 As Andocides: "May we never again see the charcoal-burners and their sheep and cattle and wagons coming from the hills" (*Suda*, s.v. *skandix*).

47 See Raaflaub, 2004, 96–102 and, for the identification of freedom with democracy, 203–249.

48 Slater, 2002, 45–47 and in Sommerstein et al., 397–416; MacDowell, 1983, 147.

49 In the *Agamemnon*, "*polis*" refers nineteen times to Troy (including the first ten uses), and eleven times to Argos (*Agam*. 476, 501, 844, 855 etc.). The word is used in the *Libation Bearers* only twice (289, 1046), in contrast to twenty-two uses in the *Eumenides*, all but four referring to Athens.

50 Orestes' references to Apollo (*LB* 269, 558–559, 900, 953, 1031, 1057–1060) and declaration that he will seek purification in Delphi (1034–1039) lead us to expect the *Eumenides* to open at Apollo's temple. See Bowie in Goldhill and Hall, 212; Revermann, 240–247 in Revermann and Wilson for the shift, and 245 for the very few plays set in Athens. See Taplin, 1977, 375–379 on the highly unusual move at the opening of the *Eumenides* of twice leaving the stage empty; Seaford, 2012, 178–187 on the *Oresteia* vs. the *Bacchae*'s use of space.

extraordinarily, to erase the stage, and with it the *polis*, by shifting our attention. The *Bacchae*, as we have seen, contrasts the theater space that the audience can see, which represents Pentheus' palace and the city it dominates, to the space they cannot, the reported space of the mountain. Astonishingly, as the play progresses, this latter, unseen space comes to seem more real than the visible acting space before us. Euripides' extraordinary effect, both of having Dionysus escape the palace effortlessly and of convincing us that the palace itself is in ruins, adds to the eeriness and unreality of the space on stage. Simultaneously the chorus, Cadmus and Teiresias, the servant, Pentheus, and the messenger all direct our attention away from the stage and toward the mountain, effectively deconstructing the reality before us, and so reenacting Dionysus' conquest. And, in the most extreme experiment of all, as the audience, with Agave, is brought slowly back to reality, what appears before us is the empty mask that we had taken for a human being.

Unlike the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae*, which, in very different ways, use the actual, physical location of the playing space to give the play meaning, the *Acharnians* instead points out that the meaning of that space is determined by the audience's imagination.[51] The use gives us a prime example, as well, of an inconsistency, often taken as due merely to comic license, which in fact makes one of the most important points of the play. By allowing Dikaiopolis to move seamlessly from the Assembly to his Rural Dionysia to Euripides' home, and then by creating a market open to those both inside and outside the city, Aristophanes also allows him to erase the city walls, the essence of the play's definitive "big idea."[52]

Dikaiopolis' disregard of boundaries, like Amphitheos' amazing journey to Sparta, posits a freedom that is impossible, but now not because of oceans or mountain ranges, like those described by the Persian and Thracian ambassadors, but because of the purely human determination that calls this "Athens" and that "Boeotia," "Megara," or "Sparta." In this way, what is funniest about Dikaiopolis' escape is that it is so simple—since the boundary he crosses is a purely imaginary one. As in the *Lysistrata*, where the ambassadors mark out their individual properties on the (quite visibly continuous) naked body of Reconcilement, the inconsistency of the *Acharnians* points out that the polit-

51 See Ruffell, 2011, *passim* on the audience's active participation in constructing the fictive world of comedy.

52 See Bakola, 2010, 246–251 for a similarly fluid use of space in Cratinus. In contrast she cites Wiles, 2000, 122: "typically the characters of tragedy are trapped in a situation from which no physical escape is possible," leading to a "very precise definition of the tragic scene" (Bakola, 248).

ical boundaries that have confined Dikaiopolis are themselves artificial and absurd.[53] The paradox of the play lies not here, though, but in the suggestion, made with Dikaiopolis' isolation, that we need them all the same.

3.1 *Dikaiopolis Fair and Foul* or *Absurdity and the City*

The essential theme of the *Acharnians* is the possibility of simply abandoning the *polis* and striking out on one's own. As explored through Dikaiopolis, however, the freedom that is thereby grasped turns out to be deeply ambivalent. Aristophanes creates the ambivalence by giving us, simultaneously, two very different views of Dikaiopolis. In presenting the city as an artificial and arbitrary obstacle to human desires, Aristophanes appeals to us, the audience, as individuals, encouraging us to delight in Dikaiopolis' ability, as an individual pursuing his own interests, to free himself from the city's constraints. But Aristophanes also appeals to his audience as Athenians, "all here ourselves at the Lenaia" (504). From this point of view the city is what unites us, and what is striking in Dikaiopolis is how his disinclination to share removes him from the circle that we have been encouraged to see as "us."[54]

These two different views of Dikaiopolis are, of course, familiar, as the bases of two fundamentally opposed readings of the play.[55] I argue here that, regardless of the fact that the views are contradictory, Aristophanes deliberately encourages both of them, which explains as well why both views have found strong supporters with convincing arguments. Aristophanes' inclusion of both positions appears in small in Dikaiopolis' self-defense at the center of the play.

53 Saxenhouse in Mhire and Frost, 91: "Aristophanes' comedies illustrate the permeability of boundaries, questioning the naturalness they acquire over time, but they show as well the unsettling consequences of not constructing boundaries"; similarly, see Bowie, 1993, 101 on the artificiality of legal control in *Wasps*.

54 A.M. Bowie, 1993, 39: "Dikaiopolis' private treaty and its consequences are thus presented through a number of different filters; so that they appear in different ways depending on whether the viewpoint is that of the individual or the city." On the double vision see also Bowie, 1982 and Fisher, 1993. Platter, 2006, 61–62 sees the play as a classic example of "pitting competing discourses against each another."

55 For positive views of Dikaiopolis see Parker's strident defense, 1991, occasioned by E.L. Bowie's (1988) remark that Dikaiopolis' behavior is not worthy of his name; Olson, 1991; MacDowell 1983 and 1995, 75–77 for further references. Whitman, 59–69 sees Dikaiopolis as exhibiting the regular *poneria* of the comic hero. For his selfishness see Newiger, 1980, 223; Dover, 1972, 87–88; Nussbaum, 1980, 94–96; Foley, 1988; Carey, 1993 249–251. The fact that both readings are supported by strong arguments and vehement proponents, and that neither has been able to make the other give way, suggests that the difficulty may lie in our assuming that we must decide for one or the other.

Dikaiopolis argues that the Spartans, in attacking Athens, have done no differently than Athens would have done. In fact, the argument implies (as was intimated in the exposure of the "Persians," 115–122), there is no "us" vs. "them." Both "us" and "them" are only collections of individuals, doing what individuals naturally do, which is to look out for themselves. Half of the chorus is convinced by this. The other half, unimpressed, reply: "Well so, if it is right (*dikaia*), does *he* have any right to say it?" (562).[56] This half of the chorus does not care about universal arguments; it is convinced, instead, when Dikaiopolis proves to be not a beggar at all, but rather a true citizen (*polites chrestos*, 595)—that is, one of "us."[57]

Ambivalence pervades Aristophanes. Here, however, it is important to notice that the object of the play's ambivalence is Dikaiopolis' newfound independence, not Dikaiopolis himself. As we will see in looking at the *Wasps*, Aristophanic comedy does not aim to be a character study. The *Acharnians* is, accordingly, not a study of Dikaiopolis, but a fantasy about an ordinary person's release from the restraints of the community. When we see the play from this vantage point, it becomes clear that its double vision is not meant to show us that we were deceived in Dikaiopolis, or that Dikaiopolis is, like a comic Macbeth, a good character drawn into evil. Nor is the ambivalence directed toward Dikaiopolis' desire for peace. From Dikaiopolis to the Acharnians to Dercetes, every character in the play, even finally Lamachus, sees that peace is preferable to war. The peace that Dikaiopolis achieves is portrayed, unequivocally, as good, whether he chooses to share it with others or not. The double vision that the play creates is not about Dikaiopolis' escape from war; it is about his more basic escape from the constraints of society itself.

Despite the differing opinions about the play's final attitude toward Dikaiopolis' private peace, scholars are agreed that the play begins by presenting the idea, and Dikaiopolis himself, in a purely positive light. Aristophanes

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56 See Olson, *Acharn.*, 220 for the emphasis. Dikaiopolis' arguments mirror those of the *Telephus*, particularly if, as Heath, 1987c has argued, Telephus made one speech in which he defended the Trojans and another in which he defended himself. Telephus' decision to guide the Greeks but not join them (as his wife was Priam's daughter) also reflects both a "universal" and a Greek identity. See Hall, 1989, 186–187, 215–218 for Euripides' occasional "universalist" sentiment. In contrast, taking a hostage threatens "one's own."

57 The "us vs. them" theme continues Dikaiopolis' introduction in contrast to the ambassadors, corrupt politicians, Persians, and Thracians of the first scene, and Amphitheos' claim to be a god "on both sides" as in Pericles' law requiring a citizen to be *amphoin aston*, "a citizen on both sides" (Hall, 1989, 174–176). Welsh, 1983 also sees an in-joke on an actual Amphitheos, a fellow-demesman of Aristophanes.

introduces Dikaiopolis as the quintessential Athenian, contrasting him, in this regard, to the lazy Assembly officers (*prytaneis*) who care more about their position in the front seats than about the *polis* (23–26, 42, with, presumably, a side glance at the important people currently enjoying the *prohedria*, or privilege of sitting in the front seats, in the theater), to the ambassadors profiteering from the war, and to the effeminate "Persians" on the one hand and the barbarian "Odomanti" on the other. Moreover, Dikaiopolis' initial monologue about, essentially, waiting for the performance to begin immediately connects him to the audience of the play, who have themselves just been doing exactly the same thing. And finally, Dikaiopolis' opening cry—"O *polis, polis*!"—along with his tastes in tragedy and politics set up an identification with Aristophanes himself that is, startlingly, clinched in Dikaiopolis' own words:

> And yet, I'm a good deal afraid. For I know the ways
> of the country-folk, how much they delight
> when someone speaks well of them and the city,
> some imposter, speaking either rightly or wrongly …
> And I know myself what I suffered at Cleon's hands
> on account of my comedy last year …
>
> 370–373, 377–378

> For this time Cleon will not make accusations that I,
> in the presence of strangers, spoke badly of the city.
> We are by ourselves; the contest is the Lenaia;
> no strangers are here yet …
>
> 502–505

If there were any doubt about the audience's invitation to identify with him, Dikaiopolis' evident role as a mouthpiece for Aristophanes and his appeal to "us," as pure unmixed Athenians at the Lenaia, must surely overcome it.[58]

The complications begin in the second half of the play, as Dikaiopolis' two different roles—as a champion of freedom and self-interest and as one of "us"—begin to pull apart. The theme, prepared for by Dikaiopolis' description of Pericles confusing private interest and public good (515 ff.), begins as the hero begins to reap the rewards of his newfound freedom.[59] On the one hand,

58 Biles, 2011, 56–96 takes this identification as straightforward throughout.

59 For similar comic attacks on Pericles see *Peace* 605 ff. and, among other comedians, particularly Cratinus, Bakola, 2019, 180–227; Braun, 214–216 and 224 n. 89 in Harvey and

Aristophanes stresses Dikaiopolis' positive name, "Just City" (he is addressed by it no fewer than seven times in the course of the play), and continues to identify himself with his protagonist by ending the play with Dikaiopolis' victory celebration, a celebration clearly intended to prefigure Aristophanes' victory in the theatrical competition.[60] On the other hand, Aristophanes goes out of his way to make Dercetes, the bereft farmer who Dikaiopolis refuses to help, resemble Dikaiopolis as he was at the beginning of the play,[61] and to put Dikaiopolis' marketplace profiteering in stark contrast to the harsh words about the market (33–36) that Aristophanes had him open with.[62]

As we will see in the next chapter, Aristophanes often invites us both to enjoy, vicariously, the success of his hero and to see him from a very different point of view, that of the city. Here, while we are enjoying the luxury Dikaiopolis comes to enjoy, we are also invited to see him from the point of view of the chorus, with whom he refuses to share (1037–1046).[63] The shift is marked by the elaboration of the feast with which Dikaiopolis tempts the chorus (and perhaps also the audience) and which the chorus, calling the attention of the city (836–838, 971–972, 1015–1017), comments on in increasingly longing terms (836–840, 971–976,

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Wilkins. The speech also refers back to the inter-involvement of private goals and public consequences in Herodotus and Homer. On the Herodotus reference, *pro*, Rau, 1967, 40; Forrest, 1963, 8; Edmunds, 1980, 13; Fisher, 1993, 37 and *contra*, Fornara, 1971, 25–34; Heath, 1987a, 17.

60 MacDowell, 1983, 160. Dikaiopolis' name appears at 406, 748, 749, 823, 958, 1048, 1085, foreshadowed by his "O *polis, polis*" (27). See Olson, 1992 on naming in comedy and the use of delay, as here, for emphasis. For the additional implication that Dikaiopolis is more a "city" than a "citizen" see the end of this section.

61 A pro-Dikaiopolis solution, found in the existence of an actual Dercetes of Phyle, suffers from the difficulty that we can only invent reasons why he should be denied peace (Olson, 2002, 325; Parker, 1991, 206). In contrast see Dover, 1963, 22: "This fantastic selfishness is fully savoured when it is denied to an equal, but it may be granted, with lordly caprice, to an inferior, e.g. a woman or child."

62 Olson's solution (1991, as Compton-Engle, 1999) which cites Dikaiopolis' barter economy ignores the simpler explanation that an exchange of visible objects is simply funnier than a cash transaction. The movement from foreigners to fellow citizens and from sycophants to farmers also undermines the "us" vs. "them" theme established through dialect and the contrast of honest citizens and informers.

63 The chorus has a positive view of Dikaiopolis' exclusions (836–858) until it begins to feel the exclusion itself, as Olson, 2002, 327. In contrast, in *Peace* both chorus and audience are explicitly invited to share the banquet, for which see Chapter Six. Halliwell, 1991 (esp. 286–287) and 2008 is relevant here, arguing for both a positive use of laughter as marking *philoi* and a negative use as an attack upon *echthroi*.

988–991, 1008–1017, 1037–1046).[64] Dikaiopolis, it appears, is "no public worker" (1030), in more senses than one.

Having set up these two contrary ways of seeing Dikaiopolis, Aristophanes underlines them through a contrast with Lamachus. When Aristophanes first sets up the opposition between his hero and Lamachus, Dikaiopolis is the "true citizen" and Lamachus, like the profiteering ambassadors of the first scene, is merely another parasite (595–619). As the play continues, however, Lamachus looks more and more like the poor grunts Dikaiopolis identified with and appealed to (72–73, 607 ff.), until finally Lamachus departs to spend his Festival on guard against Boeotian raids, like the one in which Dercetes' oxen were taken (1023), while Dikaiopolis departs to exactly the kind of public banquet he complained about at the opening of the play, the kind that ambassadors and fancy politicians attend, but never honest citizens (123–127, 1085–1087).

On the surface Dikaiopolis seems, with his invitation to dine with the priest of Dionysus, to have become the ultimate insider, while Lamachus has been banished to the hinterland.[65] In this play, however, as brought out in Dikaiopolis' confrontation with Lamachus (595–619), those who profit from the city, particularly those who enjoy its hospitality, are parasites, in contrast to the real citizens, who do the actual fighting. Though Dikaiopolis is enjoying the benefits of peace, which is good, and Lamachus is suffering the evils of a war he brought upon himself (and Athens), Dikaiopolis has also joined the self-seeking officials of the prologue, while Lamachus now resembles those war-weary sufferers, the Acharnians.[66] Moreover, as Lamachus reenters in rags, introduced by a parody of the *Telephus* (1180–1181) and limping on a wounded leg, it now seems to be Lamachus rather than Dikaiopolis who has taken over Telephus' role as the unrecognized patriot.[67]

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64 Culminating in the final lyric passage (1150 ff.) which condemns the producer, Antimachus, "Mr. Anti-war," for not inviting the chorus to a feast. For the identity of Antimachus see Olson, *Acharn.*, 348, though, like Lamachus, "Mr. Very-warlike," he may have been chosen primarily for his name.

65 This would be particularly true if the priest also invited the victorious poet to dinner, as Olson, *Acharn.*, 335.

66 As Sommerstein, *Acharn.*, 210. Lamachus' notorious poverty reinforces his final identification with ordinary soldiers rather than (as Olson 1991, 201–202) implying that he is "trying to grow rich in public service" (in which case he has failed miserably). L.P.E. Parker: "Lamachus is completely obdurate and completely despicable" (1991, 206) seems extreme, even for his first appearance.

67 As Foley 1988, 35; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 30; Platter, 2006, 148; Reckford, 1987, 195–196 who sees Telephus' as a "scapegoat" role. Whitman, 1966, 69 points out the ambivalence: "One may

Essentially, what has happened is that Dikaiopolis, in becoming free of the city, has also separated himself from his fellow Athenians. Dikaiopolis begins the play in the most Athenian of places, the Assembly. If Slater is correct that the theater audience itself plays the role of Dikaiopolis' fellow attendees, Aristophanes has quite literally put the audience on Dikaiopolis' side.[68] From the moment that Dikaiopolis adjourns the Assembly, however, he is less and less part of a group. His Rural Dionysia, held by himself, his slave, his wife, and his daughter, is like a single-handed Fourth of July parade held in April.[69] The group that most naturally would join him, the chorus of watching Acharnians, are instead getting ready to pelt him with stones. Having established that Dikaiopolis has a family, Aristophanes then has them disappear, not to be mentioned again for the rest of the play. When officials are needed for his market, Dikaiopolis appoints (having had them chosen by lot) three whips (723–724).[70] The elaborate preparations for his feast highlight the visible absence of anyone to eat it with him. And finally, as the play closes, Dikaiopolis wins the contest of the Festival of the Pitchers handily, at least partially because there seem to be no other contestants. It is also worth noting that this festival was unique as the one time an Athenian drank alone.[71]

There is a metatheatrical side as well. The Athenians celebrated the Rural Dionysia in December, the Lenaia in January, and the Festival of the Pitchers in February. Dikaiopolis, in contrast, celebrates the Rural Dionysia and the Festival of the Pitchers back-to-back—missing only the festival that, as Aristophanes reminds us, "we" Athenians in the audience happen to be celebrating right now.[72]

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say that this is a satisfying table-turning, but it is also a case of comedy's freedom from consistency and its double view of everything." On the tragic parody of the messenger speech see Sommerstein, 1978, 390–395.

68 In contrast, L.P.E. Parker, 1991, 204, n. 7 sees the disappearance of the Assembly as the first sign that things are going right for Dikaiopolis.

69 See Reckford, 1987, 48; Fisher, 1993, 34–35.

70 They turn out to be not very efficient, as 824–825.

71 Fisher, 1993, 42–44; Hoffman, 1989, 98–99; Vickers in Goldhill and Osborne, 1994, 43–49; Parke, 1977, 113–115. A.M. Bowie, 1993, 36–38 sees Aristophanes as taking advantage of an ambivalence inherent in the Anthesteria.

72 Although Aristophanes' festivals are often displaced in time, like the Thesmophoria of the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, the sequence here seems pointed, as Edmunds, 1980, 19. Despite Slater's view (2002, 63 and in Sommerstein et al. 411–414, as Habash, 1995) of the sequence as a triumphant move through the agricultural year, the reminder that "we are all here at the Lenaia" (504) with the closing reference to Aristophanes' hoped for victory (Sommerstein, *Acharn.*, 215; Olson, *Acharn.*, 365) locates the audience firmly in January.

The final indication of the *Acharnians*' ambivalence lies in Dikaiopolis' name. It is clear that Aristophanes chose and emphasized the name in order to create a positive response to the character. The naming of Aristophanes' characters, however, such as "Trugaios," the wine-lees-tragi-comedian, or "Philocleon," the oxymoronic Cleon-loving Aristophanic hero, is a good deal more subtle than Bunyan's "Christian" or "Mr. Worldly Wiseman." Dikaiopolis' name is positive, but its implications go further. Its most obvious meaning is not (as one might have expected) "Just Citizen," but rather "Just City."[73] Which is precisely what Dikaiopolis is. Dikaiopolis, who acts in exactly the way that Aristophanes is recommending for Athens, conducts himself as if he were his own independent city, which, given comedy's view of the city as contingent, he can do. As such he establishes his own market, marks out his boundaries (720), employs his own policemen (723–724, 927), and makes his own rules, in particular one forbidding informers (824–825, 895). There is nothing wrong with Dikaiopolis' "just city" or the way he conducts it.[74] The problem is only, as in the word *monos*, "alone," with which he regularly ends his lines (29, 110, 131, etc.), that Dikaiopolis' boundaries include only himself.[75]

73 For Dikaiopolis as "Just City" see Bailey, 1936; Edmunds, 1980, 1 n. 2; Foley, 1988, 46 n. 52. E.L. Bowie, 1988 argues a reference to Eupolis, and see Sidwell in Griffiths and 2009. See L.P.E. Parker, 1991 *contra* and Russo, 1994, 34–35, 252. On Dikaiopolis as his own city seen as positive, see McGlew, 2002, 66ff.; Nichols, 1998, 60 and as ambivalent Fisher, 1993. Whitman, 1982, 41 renders as "man of public justice"; Lowe, 2008, 39 as "just-[in-respect-of-his-]city"; McLeish, 1995, 78–79 and MacDowell, 1995, 78–79 give other explanations, such as "making the city just," "just towards the city" etc. Olson, *Acharn.*, 179 cites the only other use, Pindar's *Pythian* 8.22, describing Aegina and meaning "well-governed."

74 For Dikaiopolis creating his own city, Fisher, 1993, 39; and as his own city, Saxenhouse in Mhire and Frost, 93. Against claims that he is unjust (as Foley, 1988, 45–46) see his refusal of the Bridegroom's gift once he sees what is asked in exchange (1054–1055). As his own city, Dikaiopolis has no more obligation to Dercetes or the Bridegroom than to the Megarian or Boeotian—which is the point. The absurdity is captured by L.P.E. Parker, 1991, 205: "He has simply managed to withdraw into a tiny world of individual sanity, realizing the fantasy that lies behind the car-sticker inscribed 'nuclear-free zone.'"

75 Although this is usual in Aristophanes, in the *Acharnians* it is pointed, with eleven instances of *monos* ending the line, nine of them by or about Dikaiopolis, against six each in *Knights* and *Wasps*, four in *Peace* and one in *Clouds*. Dikaiopolis' "make peace for me alone" (131), for example, repeats exactly Amphitheos' declaration that the gods gave the task "to make peace to me alone" (51–52), which also underlines the difference.

3.2 *Dikaiopolis, Telephus, and Aristophanes: Dressing up as Yourself*

The *Acharnians* distinguishes itself from other extant comedies by having the comic actor, here Dikaiopolis, speak directly for the playwright.[76] At first glance, this would seem to argue against the ambivalent view of the hero I have presented. Instead, however, Aristophanes uses this identification to add another level of complexity to our response. He does so through a focus on costume, one of the ways, as we saw in Chapter One, in which comedy directly opposes itself to tragedy. The *Acharnians* takes this opposition one step further, by extending the idea of costume to that of disguise. Accordingly, Aristophanes undercuts his two identifications of himself with Dikaiopolis (377–384, 502–508) by interrupting them with a scene in which the comic hero adopts the tragic disguise of Telephus. Moreover, the *vun oun* ("so now") of line 383—"I know about myself, what I suffered at Cleon's hands because of last year's comedy ... So now, first of all before I speak, please let me dress myself as piteously as I can" (377–378, 383–384, Sommerstein's translation)—implies that the reason for the disguise is precisely the identification, that is, "Dikaiopolis'" memory of what Aristophanes had suffered.

Dikaiopolis' adoption of the tragic costume of Telephus is paradoxical. In the first part of the play, the hero has been portrayed as the one straightforward person among the humbugs, exposing the fake Persians and Odomanti and revealing the self-interest of the ambassadors. In the *parabasis*, similarly, the chorus assures us that their director, Aristophanes, exposes flattering ambassadors (633–640), and promises that "he will direct you in many good things, so that you prosper, / not flattering, or holding out profits, or bamboozling / or playing the rogue, or sprinkling with praise, but directing for the best" (666–668).

Dikaiopolis clinches his victory over Lamachus by revealing that he is no beggar, but a true citizen (597), just as Aristophanes implies that he, and not Cleon, is the person Athens should trust. What is strange is that Dikaiopolis and Aristophanes show this by wearing a disguise, Dikaiopolis the disguise of looking like Telephus, and Aristophanes the disguise of looking like Dikaiopolis. What emerges, as we shall see, is the complex way in which Aristophanes

76 For reasons unspecified, A.M. Bowie, 1982, 29 disagrees with Ste. Croix's point (1972, 363) that this is unique. See Slater, 2002, 50; Wright, 2012, 13–16 who stresses the ambivalence; Goldhill, 1991, 188–201 for a summary. Reckford, 1987, 179 renews the Scholiast's suggestion that Aristophanes played the role of Dikaiopolis, for which see Sutton, 1988; Slater, 1989 and 2002, 56–58 for further references. If so, this provides more levels to play with, but no more justifies Dikaiopolis than Shakespeare's playing the ghost in *Hamlet* proves that the ghost is right to demand revenge.

is and is not like his hero, and so also the way in which the comic poet's ambivalence is of service to the city.

The disguise that Dikaiopolis takes on is that of Euripides' Telephus, from a play produced in 438, almost fifteen years before the *Acharnians*. The arc of the story explains Aristophanes' use. According to the myth, Telephus, the king of Mysia, appears to be a barbarian, but is in fact Greek, a son of Heracles by Auge. Attacked by Agamemnon and the Greek forces on their way to Troy, the Mysians defend themselves and Telephus is wounded by Achilles. Learning that he can only be cured by that which wounded him (Achilles' spear), he disguises himself and enters the Greek camp. Here the events of Euripides' play probably resembled the parody of the *Women at the Thesmophoria* rather than that of the *Acharnians*: Telephus, in disguise as a beggar, argues that the Mysians have done only what the Greeks themselves would have done and criticizes the plan to attack Troy; his identity is then discovered, causing him to take the infant Orestes hostage in order to save himself. At this point it is revealed that Telephus is in fact Greek, whereupon he throws off his ragged disguise and is accepted by the chiefs of the army as one of them.[77] In exchange for being healed, he consents to pilot the Greeks to Troy and, although he will not fight the Trojans, he agrees to serve as the Greeks' "lucky charm."[78]

The point seems straightforward. The two passages in which Dikaiopolis speaks directly as Aristophanes, and which frame the scene with Euripides, remind the audience that Cleon had attacked Aristophanes' patriotic credentials. Thus, according to the parody, Aristophanes, like Dikaiopolis, like Telephus, questions the war, but turns out to be a true citizen, while his opponent, Cleon, like Lamachus, like (perhaps) Achilles, is revealed as a war-mongering phony.[79]

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77 Walton, 1980, 153 notes that Euripides' penchant for realism may have resulted in his using an actual disguise rather than the symbolic disguise usual in tragedy, which would add further point to the parody. Russo, 1994, 51 and Stone, 1981, 416–418 see Dikaiopolis as also throwing off an actual disguise.

78 For reconstructions of *Telephus*, Miller, 1948; Handley and Rea, 1957; Heath, 1987b; Collard et al., *Euripides*, 1.17–52 and Webster, 1967b, 43–48 for Aeschylus' and Sophocles' earlier Telephus plays. See MacDowell, 1995, 53–58 for parallels to *Acharnians* and 61–62 for Aristophanes' borrowings as exaggerated. For a focus on Telephus as barbarian, frs. 696, 719, 727 and Cropp, 1.24 in Collard et al., *Euripides*.

79 As Foley, 1988, 37–38. Thus Telephus casts off his rags, Dikaiopolis casts off his rags, and Aristophanes casts off the illusion that Dikaiopolis is the one speaking, for which see Reckford, 1987, 175–178. For Achilles' appearance see fr. 727c in Collard et al., *Euripides*. The Scholiast adds that Cleon's attack claimed that Aristophanes was a foreigner, explaining

This identification is clearly a major reason for the long *Telephus* parody, which extends from the hostage scene (325ff.) to Dikaiopolis' offer to (literally) put his head on the block (318, 355–367, 492) to his speech defending his support of peace (496–556).[80] But by including the scene with Euripides, Aristophanes complicates the issue. First of all, Dikaiopolis' avowed aim in disguising himself as Telephus—"so that with my little pet phrases I can give them [the chorus] the finger" (444, so the Scholiast to *Peace* 549)—seems a curious desire for Aristophanes. Secondly, because of the way Aristophanes has arranged the scenes, the disguise is pointless. Aristophanes reverses the order of the *Telephus*, having Dikaiopolis use his hostage, not his disguise, to get the chorus listen to his case. As a result Dikaiopolis' "disguise" cannot hide his identity, since, as they remind us just before his speech, the chorus knows exactly who is giving the speech and why (490–495).[81] Nor, if the person "really" hidden is Aristophanes, is it clear why the poet would hide from a chorus that is about to speak for him in the *parabasis*. Aristophanes points to Euripides' play with reality and appearance in his quote from the *Telephus*: "for I must seem to be a beggar this day / and be just what I am, but not seem so" (440–441).[82] But if his aim is to show the Athenians how they are bamboozled (370–374, 633–641), it seems odd that his method of doing so is to bamboozle them.

Few scholars have commented on this peculiarity in the *Telephus* parody, and those who have, have tended to follow Foley, who sees the scene as indi-

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the reference to Aegina at 652–655; see MacDowell, 1995, 42–45; Slater, 2002, 254 n. 34 for the controversy and a bibliography.

80 For the "beheading" scene as taking the Euripidean Telephus' offer (fr. 706) literally, see Olson, *Acharn.*, 160.

81 In contrast, the *Women at the Thesmophoria* follows the *Telephus*' ordering of events—disguise, speech, exposure and then hostage scene—with the exposure motivating the taking of a hostage, as Cropp in Collard et al., *Euripides*, 1.19; Heath, 1987b, 273; Olson, *WT*, lvi–viii. Dobrov, 2001, 47 exceptionally points to the violation of logic in Dikaiopolis adopting the disguise only after being discovered, and see Robson in McHardy et al., 2005, 174–175. Despite Foley, 1988, 40–41: "[Dikaiopolis] needs the tragic label to fool the chorus, who are to be impressed by arguments made in tragic guise that they stupidly reject in comic form" and Dikaiopolis' prediction (440–444), the chorus clearly knows who Dikaiopolis is throughout. McGlew, 2002, 79–80, accordingly, sees the disguise as aimed at Lamachus. Silk, 2000, who sees Aristophanic characters as usually transformed by disguise (243), appears to see this as an exception (346), while Russo, 1994, 50–51 sees the discrepancy as simply dramatic illusion.

82 The reference is reported by Triclinius, as Sommerstein, *Acharn.*, 178; Olson *Acharn.*,189, but the violation of Porson's law in 440 indicates that the line must be adapted.

cating that comedy must dress as tragedy in order to be taken seriously.[83] This interpretation, however, neglects the main point of the scene, which is that what Dikaiopolis wants is not a real tragic costume, but a degraded Euripidean tragic costume, the kind of costume we have already seen Aristophanes connect to the defendant's trick of looking pitiful before a jury.[84] In fact, as we will see, in dressing up as Telephus, Dikaiopolis adopts not a tragic disguise, but rather a comic costume, as in the coinage "trugody" used throughout the section, and throughout Aristophanes, for a juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy (499, 500, 628).[85] Rather than implying that comedy must dress as tragedy to be taken seriously, the scene points out that comedy, in its own right, has a claim equal to that of tragedy. As Dikaiopolis says, "trugody too knows what is right" (500).

As is apparent in both the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae* (in the very different ways of Aeschylus and Euripides), tragedy can be as interested as comedy in disguise and deception. In tragedy, however, disguise, like costume more generally, points to a deeper reality. It is also impenetrable. Thus, while Clytemnestra's elaborate irony, Orestes' self-identification as a foreigner, or Pentheus' appearance as his doppelgänger, Dionysus, all point to important elements in their characters, Agamemnon cannot see the true Clytemnestra, Clytemnestra cannot recognize the "Phocian" at her door, and Agave does not know whom she

83 Foley, 1988 and similarly Harriot, 1986, 30–36; Dobrov, 2001, 50 sees the disguise as mediating between comedy and tragedy. C. Segal, 1965, 308 and Olson, 1991, 202 point out the contrast between the well-tended officials and the "ragged" true citizens, without noting that Dikaiopolis' rags, at any rate, are borrowed. See Rau, 1967, 19–42 for the parody and Dobrov, 2001, 37–53 as demonstrating Aristophanes' mastery of tragedy. Silk, 2000, 41 unusually notes the complication: "Whatever else may be said about Dicaeopolis' speech (and its continuation), it is apparent that the claim to 'seriousness' here is the opposite of straightforward" as also Hesk, 2001, 259–271.

84 See Chapter One on *Frogs* 1065–1068 and compare *Wasps* 564–565, *Apology* 34c etc.

85 For the ambivalence of "trugody" see Wright, 2012, 17–20 and, seminally, Taplin, 1983; Silk, 2000, 41 for the mistake of taking it as simply equivalent to comedy. Silk also points out that: "If 'comedy *too*' implies that comedy sometimes can or does occupy tragic ground, the more fundamental corollary is that comedy normally has its own territory." Dobrov, 2001, 50–53 sees the term as indicating an "imaginary rivalry" with Euripides; Slater, 2002: "In his attempt to put comedy on a par with tragedy Aristophanes may have invented a term that, while punning on the name of tragedy, attempts to construct comedy as an alternate (and equally important) source of poetic authority in the city." For Eupolis' use (fr. 99) see Storey in Harvey and Wilkins, 182; A.T. Edwards, 1991 sees the root term "*trux*" as itself combining high and low, and 158 n. 3 for a criticism of Foley's (1988) view as simply "paratragedy" or "comedy with a tragic accent."

has destroyed. In the *Acharnians*, in contrast, disguise tends to be ineffective, and to point primarily to itself.[86] The "Persians" and "Odomanti" who introduce the theme of disguise in the first scenes of the play, are immediately exposed, and Dikaiopolis is aware throughout of who the Megarian's "piggies" really are. Similarly, Dikaiopolis' Telephus disguise serves not to deceive anyone, but rather to emphasize the theme of disguise. And in case there was any doubt, Aristophanes has the "beggar" begin by declaring that he too has had his vines destroyed (512).[87]

Disguise in tragedy does not need to imply ambivalence, since, for the other characters, it is impenetrable, while for the audience it is a deeper way of perceiving reality. In comedy, in contrast, disguise tends to lead to a questioning of the nature of costume, and of identity, altogether. In the *Acharnians*, not only the Persians, the Odomanti, Telephus, and the Megarian piggies, but also Dercetes (1024) and, presumably, the best man and bridesmaid wear particular outfits, a theme that culminates when Lamachus, like a Homeric hero, arms himself with the instruments of war while Dikaiopolis, in parallel, "arms" himself with the benefits of peace (1097–1142).[88] What begins with disguise thus ends with costume and, in particular, with the costumes not of the theater, but of ordinary life—the kind of costume that a person, best man, bridesmaid, or soldier, wears as a mark of who they are.[89] Even in the case of the "piggies," the pun on *choiros*, which can mean either "pig" or "cunt" (as our "pussy"), creates the same effect. As the Megarian points out—"If she fattens up and gets

86 See Bakola, 2010, 259–260; Stone, 1981, 398–438; Saïd, 1987; Muecke, 1982b; Revermann, 1997. The inefficacy of disguise in *Acharnians* is heralded by the Persian ambassador named "Pseudartabas" or "Fake-artabus" (99). More generally, the women's disguise in *Assemblywomen* is an exception, while, in dramatic contrast to the *Bacchae*, for example, Dionysus' disguise in the *Frogs* is greeted by Heracles' laughter (40 ff.) and then alternately backfires and is abandoned (457 ff.).

87 Strauss, 1966, 65. The only thing the disguise actually accomplishes is to make the second half of the chorus (558) and Lamachus (593) unwilling to listen to Dikaiopolis.

88 On the Persian / Athenians see Chiasson, 1984; for the Odomanti and *Acharn.* 158–159 on circumcision, Henderson, *Acharn., Knights*, 78 n. 30; Stone 1981, 112; and contrary, Sommerstein, *Acharn.*, 164–165; Olson, *Acharn.*, 120–121. For Dercetes' white clothing see L.P.E. Parker, 1991; Stone, 276 who sees it as dung-stained and Oakley and Sinos, 16–18 for special wedding clothes including those worn by attendants.

89 As Muecke 1982b. MacDowell, 1995, 58 points out that Dikaiopolis "never seriously pretends to be anyone but himself"; Platter, 2006, 143–175 describes levels of ambivalence in the *Acharnians* and *Women at the Thesmophoria*'s use of the *Telephus*. See Handley and Rea, 32–33 and Muecke, 1982b, 19–20 for Telephus as also disguised as what he is, a Greek.

downy with hair / she'll be the most lovely *choiros* to sacrifice to Aphrodite" (791–792)—what the girls are dressing up as is essentially just who they are.[90]

This is also true of Dikaiopolis. In adopting the costume of Telephus, Dikaiopolis does not so much become a tragic hero as he confirms his identity as a comic one. Comic characters regularly wear ordinary clothing, and often wear the clothing of the poor, which can degenerate into rags.[91] And they are supposed to have lots of accoutrements.[92] As Dikaiopolis acquires the rags, the cap, the staff, the basket, the broken cup, the little jar, and the greens (but not the chervil), it is hard not to notice that an obsession with props is in general a characteristic of the comic, not the tragic, stage. And similarly with language. During the course of their dialogue, the mock-tragic mode of Euripides' speech gradually shifts to Dikaiopolis, until, by the end, Dikaiopolis seems indeed to have swallowed a dose of Euripidean sophistry (484). These clever "phraselets" (396–402, 447), however, like the paratragic register itself, are all natural elements of comedy, as is Dikaiopolis' metatheater in looking, explicitly, for a "costume" (*enskeuasasthai m'*, 384, 436) and "props" (*skeuaria*, 451).[93] As Dikaiopolis comments (435), the disguise he gets from Euripides is a "see-through" one.[94] The effect is emphatic on stage, especially if one imagines Dikaiopolis' comic phallus peeking out from under his Euripidean rags.

Similarly, Aristophanes, in identifying himself with his comic hero, is only dressing up as what he is, a comic poet.[95] It seems likely that Euripides used

90 In contrast Dover, 1972, 65 sees Dikaiopolis recognizing the piggies as pure discontinuity for the sake of the joke.

91 For rags as "the clothing of the poor" in comedy see Olson, *Peace*, 218 on *Peace* 740 and Eupolis and Leucon as the intended target. For other examples see Socrates and his pathetic disciples in *Clouds* (as 102–104), Tereus' "plucked" appearance (*Birds* 95–105) and the initiates at *Frogs* 404–408.

92 See Foley, 1988, 44 n. 43 on the comic herbs and Ruck, 1975 for possible sexual implications. Roselli, 2005, 22–23 points out that the items borrowed are all comic props.

93 See Henderson in Dobrov, 1995, 182 for Dikaiopolis' "digestion" of tragedy.

94 Foley, 1988, 40; Slater, 2002, 56 points out that Dikaiopolis' "O Zeus who see'st through all and over all in all ways" (435) comments on the transparency. Reckford, 1987, 191 sees Aristophanes as honest, since his disguise is see-through and see Robson in Cleland et al., 70 on the *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

95 Particularly if Aristophanes was playing Dikaiopolis, as Slater in Sommerstein et al., 407–408: "the audience must know who the actor *is*—and that, I submit, is not Diacaeopolis but Aristophanes himself, acting the part." See Silk, 2000, 346: "here at least the effect of art is *not* to conceal, but to proclaim, itself"; Foley, 1988, 40, 44 on Euripides' being "wheeled out": "comedy reveals the unglamorous but important truths that tragedy (drama that depends on dramatic illusion) hides behind the stage."

Telephus' criticism of Agamemnon and the Trojan War as a way to attack Pericles and the war in Samos, just as Aristophanes uses Dikaiopolis to attack Pericles and the Peloponnesian War.[96] The difference is that metatheater, parody, and topical reference, along with the poet's inclusion of himself in his play, are all proper to Aristophanes' genre, as they are not to Euripides'.

The Telephus scene then, though it does assert comedy's equal dignity, does not show us that comedy needs to disguise itself as tragedy to be taken seriously. Rather it shows us the difference between a tragic disguise and a comic costume.[97] As we have seen, in tragedy disguise does not imply ambivalence. In contrast, a comic costume, which is meant to be seen as a costume, acknowledges two levels of reality at once, whether people are dressed up as what they are not, like the Athenian Persians, or as what they are, like the bridesmaid or Lamachus. In these terms, as comedy knows, everyone wears a costume and everyone is playing a role.[98] If the Athenians would keep this in mind when listening to the ambassadors, they would be much better off.

It is, moreover, exactly through this ambivalence, enacted in Dikaiopolis' Telephus costume, that comedy serves the city.[99] As we have seen, and as is apparent in looking at the various interpretations of the play, the *Acharnians* supports contradictory views not only of Dikaiopolis and Lamachus, but also of Dercetes, Euripides, and even the poor Megarian. The contradictions, however,

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96 See Storey in Muecke et al.; Foley, 1988, 39ff.; Heath, 1987b, 273 for this causing Aristophanes' interest in the play. Marshall, 2000 sees a political motivation in the *Alcestis* as well, produced with *Telephus*, while Aspasia's role in *Acharnians* could recall rumors that Pericles started the Samian war on her account (Theophrastus, fr. 627; Plutarch *Pericles* 24.2). Foley's view that the audience accepted political commentary in tragedy but not in comedy seems unlikely given comedy's contemporary reference.

97 See Muecke, 1982b, 30. Milanezi in Cleland et al., 82–83 points out that *rhakos* is also theatrical slang for a *skeuarion* or prop, reinforcing the point.

98 Hesk, 2001, 271: "The 'Aristophanes' of the parabasis proclaims his usefulness as an exposer of rhetorical flattery and deception on the part of those who address the demos. But that anti-rhetorical proclamation is explicitly and comically framed as a deceptive and distorted exaggeration. The play explicitly confuses the distinction between legal or political orator, comic playwright and 'ordinary' private citizen. Dicaeopolis is Aristophanes, Telephus *and* a legal defendant and a political *rhētōr*. He is also himself: a frustrated citizen-farmer who has made a private peace and sees the Spartans' point of view" while Whitman, 1982, 150–153 sees Dikaiopolis, the archetypical comic hero, as claiming a tragic prototype.

99 As Slater, 2002 argues, comedy educates the *demos* by revealing politics' many levels of "reality."

are perfectly appropriate for citizens who, as Aristophanes describes them, are not only "quick to decide" (630) but also "quick to change" (632).

Like Dikaiopolis, Aristophanes plays many roles. Unlike Dikaiopolis, however, the poet has not only his characters, but also his chorus to speak for him. Accordingly, in the *parabasis*, the chorus takes over Dikaiopolis' use of the first person to speak as Aristophanes (660–664).[100] Nor, as in the chorus's reminder that peace is not worth giving up their comic poet for (652–655), is there any attempt to make these different voices consistent.[101] The repeated uses of the word "justice" in reference to Aristophanes span the "ordinary" interchange of chorus and hero (317, 561–562), the comic hero about to speak as and speaking as the author (373, 500, 501), the chorus speaking about the author (645, 655), and the chorus speaking as the author (661). There is, however, one difference here between Aristophanes and his hero. While Dikaiopolis' name, "Just City," seemed to put him on the level of the *polis*, Aristophanes' references to *to dikaion*, "the just," consistently describe his dealings with a city more extensive than himself. As we have seen, in the *Oresteia* it is the institution of civic justice that situates the city in its own particular sphere. As we would expect, justice in the *Acharnians* is a good deal more variable, but Aristophanes still seems to focus it on the city.

Both Dikaiopolis' purely individual victory at the end of the play and the *parabasis*'s insistence that the comedy is for the sake of the city are Aristophanes'. His voice is genuinely behind his hero's frustration at the insanity of the city, and it is genuinely behind the chorus's claim that their poet is devoted to Athens. He opposes the city and he is part of it. Although this sounds perverse, it is in fact nothing other than the irrational position upon which democracy is based, that one must accept as one's own a policy that one finds it impossible to support.[102]

100 In other *parabases* Aristophanes uses the first person for himself only at *Peace* 754 (repeating *Wasps* 1030 ff., there in the third person), *Wasps* 1284–1291 and in the rewritten *parabasis* to the *Clouds*. MacDowell, *Wasps*, 299 suggests that the switch derives from the poet once playing the main role. For the additional level of complexity added by Callistratus see Halliwell, 1980; MacDowell, 1982.

101 See Foley, 1988, 37, 45; Carey, 1993; E.L. Bowie, 1988, 184 for the *parabasis's* interest in victory rather than peace; contrary, Biles, 2011, 78–79; Fisher, 1993, 38–39 with further references. As Newiger, 1980, 219–237 Aristophanes is no pacifist; and see Forrest, 1963; Gomme, 1938, 97–109.

102 As Romer in Dobrov, 1997, 66. This is also the essence of Griffith's "solidarity without consensus" (1995, following Kertzer, 1988).

In its pursuit of the irrational (and therefore funny) elements of human life, Old Comedy loved nothing better than metatheater, the pointing out that the reality its audience was involved in was actually a fiction. In the *Acharnians*, Aristophanes applies this observation to the city itself. Dikaiopolis' freeing himself from Athens is intriguing because it is impossible, and yet so easy and logical. It is impossible because society is a given of human life; it is easy because, as Aristophanes suggests, deep down each of us knows that society is only a collective fiction. The *Acharnians* thus suggests that to be a citizen is to be in the absurd position of acting as if something is true while knowing all the time that it isn't. If the audience members were not at the moment watching a play, they might have replied that this is a contradiction in terms.

CHAPTER 4

The *Wasps*: Comic Heroes/Tragic Heroes

> With pent-up fury that masked years of angst over the empty absurdity of man's fate, the one named Moe smashed the crockery.
>
> WOODY ALLEN[1]

1 Comic and Tragic Consistency

Dikaiopolis moved in the *Acharnians* from being a market-hating farmer who is firmly one of "us" to being a prosperous, and utterly individualistic, market owner. The shift reveals not a change in the comic hero, but rather a change in how we view him. This is normal in Aristophanes. As Michael Silk, among others, has pointed out, comedy is not particularly interested in consistency of character.[2] Dikaiopolis or Trugaios in the *Peace* or Dionysus in the *Frogs* may take on a new role, a new costume, and even a new nature whenever they (or their creator) please. Tragedy has a very different focus. When Pentheus comes on stage in the *Bacchae* dressed as a maenad, the effect is terrifying. The reason is not only that he is being lured to his destruction. What is even more frightening is his own hidden attraction to the danger, and the realization, building throughout the play, that his conflict with Dionysus reflects an even deeper conflict within himself.[3] There is no such conflict within Dikaiopolis. As in Woody Allen's version of the Three Stooges above, looking for internal tensions in comic heroes only reveals how angst-free they are.

The contrast is also related to tragedy's tendency to focus on necessity and comedy's to focus on freedom. Comic characters are not weighed down by their

1 *Mere Anarchy*, Ebury Press, 2007.

2 See Silk, 2000, 207–255, in Pelling, 150–173 and 160 for a bibliography.

3 Conacher, 1967, 67–69; Winnington-Ingram, 1997; Thumiger, 2007 for the *Bacchae* and the portrayal of identity in tragedy; Muecke, 1982 for the change of costume and 17–18 for a bibliography on parallels to *Women at the Thesmophoria*. As Slater, 2002, 101: "only comedy regularly shows us the kind of instability of identity associated with changing clothes on stage … when it happens in tragedy, as in Euripides' *Bacchae*, it is profoundly unsettling."

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pasts. Dikaiopolis rejects Dercetes with no reflection on their similarity; once he has returned to Athens, Trugaios' former Panhellenic zeal is forgotten; Peisetairos moves from a search for peace and quiet to tyranny over the universe without thinking of his former goal or his former companion; and while Creon ends the *Antigone* crushed by the knowledge that he has caused his own downfall, Strepsiades in *Clouds* feels no remorse at all, and proceeds directly, to an attack on Socrates. In all these cases the comic hero, having no need for consistency, is able to exist purely in the moment, without either internal conflict or constraint. Orestes' past deeds, or Oedipus' or Ajax's, are necessities that constrain their futures. For the comic hero, there is no such necessity.

Finally, for the comic hero, as we have seen in the case of Dikaiopolis, isolation poses no particular threat. Although it may seem paradoxical that a hero essentially composed of his social role can freely separate himself from society, the contrast to tragedy illuminates the situation. As Thumiger has shown, tragedy inherited from Homer a sense of self deeply embedded in the outer world. It is when the integration of the self is threatened, as in the *Bacchae*, that the "inner self" of the tragic hero comes to the fore.[4] For comic characters, however, who have no "inner self," isolation does not imply, as we will see it does for Ajax, any such crisis of identity.

In this way the differences between comic and tragic characters seems to derive largely from the contrast between an inner and an outer focus.[5] As Eugène Ionesco put it: "Take a tragedy, speed up the movement, and you will have a comedy. Empty the characters of psychological content, and again you will have a comedy: make the characters exclusively "social beings"—i.e., captives of the social machinery—and once more you will have a comedy, or perhaps a tragicomedy."[6] As we will see in the case of the *Wasps*, the result is not to make comedy a form of tragedy manqué, but rather to allow comedy to examine an element of human life that is particularly its own.

That tragedy has an interest in a character's inner self is not, however, uncontroversial. Although the position is now less prevalent, scholars continue to debate the claim, first put forward by Tycho Wilamowitz (or, some would

4 For tragic character as a "balance between man and world," Thumiger, 2007, 2, 20–26 and *passim*.

5 Garton, 1957 on Oedipus' self-blinding as a separation of outer and inner, and see Phaedra's distinction between hands and mind (*Hippolytus* 317) and Hippolytus' "my mouth swore; my heart is unsworn" (612). Lowe, 2008, 25 sees comedy as "uninterested in the kinds of intense psychological realism that tragedy found so important"; for the contrast to Menander's more psychological approach, Maurach, 2005.

6 Styan, 1974, 84 quoting Ionesco from a 1966 program.

argue, first put forward by Aristotle), that character in tragedy is primarily a function of plot and not intended to present a psychological unity.[7] In some cases this seems to be true. If Aeschylus can create a Clytemnestra, he can also cast as his "hero" a chorus representing the fifty daughters of Danaus, as in the *Suppliant Women*.[8] Similarly, in contrast to the *Medea* or *Hippolytus*, where Euripides' focus seems to be on character, plays like the *Electra* or *Orestes* seem deliberately to flatten out their heroes and heroines. On the other hand, however, even John Jones, who argues that even the concept of the "tragic hero" is mistaken, grants Euripides' interest in psychological characterization, although he sees it as destructive of tragedy.[9] Nor is the search for consistency in tragic characterization a modern one. Aristotle, who sees plot as more important than character, still objects to what he sees as inconsistency in

7 See Gibert, 1995, 45–47; Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 1917; Jones, 1962 overall and 44–46 for tragedy focused on exterior forms and events, not on an emotional life; Dale, *Alcestis*, xxiv–xxix for characters determined by "the trend of the action" and "the rhetoric of the situation," not psychological considerations; Heath, 1987c, 113 ff. for unity as a modern preoccupation. Gould, 1978 sees drama as a metaphor or image of human life, although in Powell, 1990, 76–107 he defends "unitary characterization" in Euripides.

In contrast, Seidensticker in Revermann and Wilson, 343–344 argues against Gould: "The general assumption that the high degree of formal stylization by which Greek tragedy is characterized necessarily implies that the tragedians were not interested in the psychological truth and inner unity of the dramatic characters they created cannot be accepted"; Mossman in Gregory, 96: "it is standard practice for a tragedian to use characterization to fuel and inform his plot, even to make a plot hinge on *the sort of person* at the centre of the action"; Gill, in Pelling, 1990, 18: "we find in tragedy, to a greater extent than in epic, I think, a special complexity in the presentation of the main figure as regards psychological agency and passivity, and an emphasis on the paradoxes which arise out of a combination of these psychological modes" and see Gill, 1996 *passim*. Goldhill, 1986, 168–198 and Griffin in Pelling, 1990, 128–149 find the question indeterminate. Pelling in Pelling, 1990, 245–262 provides a good overview, concluding for development and personality. More broadly, for an excellent study of the role of character in an ethical context, Williams, 1993, 46 and N. Grene, 1992 on "inner" vs. social character in the tragedies of Shakespeare.

8 Easterling, 1973 charts character in Aeschylus, particularly the *Oresteia*, as between psychology and purely "dramatic considerations." See also Seidensticker in Griffith et al., 2009; Rosenmeyer, 1982, 211–255 and Garvie, 1969, 132, claiming, rightly, that Aeschylus is not interested in character as such, and 138–139 on the *Suppliant Women*. Michelini, 1982 agrees, but refers (107 n. 28) to "a delicate psychological touch."

9 Jones, 1962, 241: "Euripides appears with a new interest in, and new reverence for, the humanity of mere consciousness. Consciousness is solitary and inward, and it is also every man's birthright or affliction."

Iphigenia's character in the *Iphigenia at Aulis* (*Poetics* 1454a32); the *Life of Sophocles* claims that Sophocles' greatest gift was depiction of character (21); and Plutarch quotes Sophocles himself as claiming that his last style "was best and most expressive of character" (*Moralia* 79b).[10]

Despite the dangers involved in generalizing about tragic characters, however, there is one quality that all the heroes and heroines of Greek tragedy share, and which is of help in investigating them. This is that they were presented and viewed in contrast to the heroes and heroines of comedy. As in the case of metatheater or contemporary reference, the contrast provides us with a useful perspective. When compared to Hamlet, King Lear, or Hedda Gabler, characters such as Agamemnon or even Antigone may seem to lack interiority.[11] When they are set against Dikaiopolis, Lysistrata or Philocleon, as they were intended to be, the picture looks very different.

The juxtaposition points strongly to the psychological focus of tragedy. Just as Aristophanic heroes are not bound in by their pasts, there is no attempt to make their lives a coherent whole. During the course of a play, just as the chorus can alter their circumstances, a comic hero's spouse, children, friends, social status, and political attitudes can appear and disappear, apparently at random.[12] Similarly, their characters can alter with the plot, as in the sausage seller's sudden transformation from complete villain to savior of Athens. This discontinuity, or perhaps fluidity of character, extends from the minor to the great, from Philocleon's teeth (missing at 164, present at 364ff.), to a slave's reference to his fellow demesmen (*Knights* 320), to Dionysus' change from

10 Lefkowitz, 1981, 163; Easterling in Easterling and Knox, 46; Zimmermann, 1991, 84 for Plutarch and the *Life of Sophocles* and, for a defense of Aristotle, Lucas, *Poetics*, 161. Studies of Sophocles have long focused on character as Winnington-Ingram, 1980; Knox's "sharply differentiated individuality" (1964, 38) or Whitman, 1966, 64: "for Sophocles the character of the hero is the core"; for a history see Goldhill and Hall in Goldhill and Hall, 11–12. For other evaluations of character in Sophocles, Blundell, 1989, 16–25 for an overall consistency of *ethos* and *dianoia* and an argument against Heath, 1987c; Kiso, 1984, 1: "Tragedy, as always in Sophocles, begins, grows, and ends in the personality of the hero"; Easterling, 1977 argues against Gellie (1988) for interiority and individuality, and even Jones, 1962, 145 concedes: "in the face of receding family solidarity we have individuation and (in a vague provisional sense) personalizing of consciousness."

11 For the contrast with Shakespeare see von Fritz, 1934, 116.

12 Corresponding to their diminished role, observed in Chapter One, the chorus of the *Peace* turns from Panhellenes to Athenians; in *Frogs* they lose their quality as initiates; the Acharnians have free access to an enemy market; the old jurors of *Wasps*, with no way to eat besides their jury pay, can nonetheless hang about and comment on their companion's new fortunes.

Euripides-obsessed buffoon to civic-minded judge.[13] Or characters may simply disappear altogether, like Euelpides in the *Birds*, Xanthias in the *Frogs*, or Praxagora in the *Assemblywomen*.[14] It is a very different situation than Oedipus' first, apparently inconsequent, response to the news that it was Jocasta who gave him up to be exposed—"She was so harsh, its mother?" (*tlemon tekousa* 1175)—which points toward his psychological connection to that abandoned baby, and so a wholeness and inner focus unknown in comedy.[15]

The difference appears as well in the treatment of time and change. In comedy change is the norm, while in tragedy it often threatens a destruction of identity, as in characters as different as Xerxes in the *Persians*, Deianara in the *Women of Trachis*, and Hecuba in the *Hecuba*. As Segal has shown for Sophocles in particular, not only Ajax and Philoctetes but also Antigone and Electra tie their identity to an inner self unaccepting of change, where even changing one's mind can be highly charged.[16] In contrast, change is so ingrained in comedy that Lysistrata's consistent dedication to her cause appears as a comic effect, set against both the flux all around her and the flexibility of the usual (male) comic hero who has either triumphed by the time of the *parabasis* or (like Philocleon) altered direction entirely. As Dionysus comments on his change from Euripides-groupie to rescuer of Aeschylus, nothing (in comedy) is shameful if the audience will buy it (*Frogs* 1475).

13 Similarly, Heracles moves within ten lines from pea soup–obsessed glutton to literary critic (*Frogs* 60–65, 73–106); Trugaios switches from a Panhellene to an exclusively Athenian focus; Demos has known all along that he was being duped (*Knights* 1121 ff. vs. 1340 ff.); and see the chorus's casual abuse of their beloved leaders (*Wasps* 342, 418, 592) or Strepsiades' sudden expertise in dithyramb (*Clouds* 335–339). Freydberg, 2008, 152 cites as well the disappearance of Trugaios' family and Blepyrus' apparently forgetting about his wife.

14 In contrast, for Euripides' flouting a tragic norm by doing this in *Andromache*, see Burnett, 1971, 130–156.

15 C. Segal, 2001, 103–104, 118; Gould, 1978, 51 for personality "experienced as in some degree continuous and developing" and Rabinowitz, 2008, 172: "the play as opposed to the myth unfolds through Oedipus' character." Budelmann, 2000, 61–91 points to depth created by what characters do not say and see Buxton, 1984, 12–15 and Valakas in Goldhill and Hall, 194: "the spectator is … meant to experience theatrical appearances as symbols of characters' 'deeper reality.'" For Agamemnon in the *Oresteia*, Romilly in Pucci, 1988 and overall Pelling, 1990, 251–253 concluding that tragedy, unlike comedy is never entirely without psychological depth.

16 Vidal-Naquet, 1988, 166; C. Segal, 1981, 262–267, 342–343; Knox, 1979, 44 and 236: "The inflexible resolution of the Sophoclean hero stems from a different conception [than Aeschylus], the aristocratic idea of a man's *physis*, his "nature."" Gibert, 1995, arguing against Knox, sees a distinction rather between Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides.

All of these characteristics appear in the *Wasps*. Like Dikaiopolis, Philocleon appears in contradictory roles, beginning the play as a juror obsessed with enforcing the law and ending it by pointedly defying the law himself.[17] And, as with Dikaiopolis, the shift reminds us that Aristophanes' characters are not bound by the demands of consistency, of the past, or of their ties to society.[18] This does not imply, however, that the picture is purely negative. Rather, Aristophanes emphasizes the inconsistency between Philocleon the jury-lover and Philocleon the free spirit in order to bring out a completely different point: that both roles, despite the contradiction, are pure expressions of power. While a tragic poet might have used this to make a profound observation about Philocleon, Aristophanes, instead, directs us to the self-contradictions inherent in the individual's relation to the city.

2 Ajax and Medea: A Focus on Identity

Sophocles' Ajax and Euripides' Medea are, in many ways, as different as tragic characters can be. Ajax fits his Homeric values as a hand fits a glove, while Medea, as a female, a barbarian, and an enchantress, is "other" both to contemporary Greek values and to the heroic code that she adopts.[19] Ajax is tied to Athens as the eponymous hero of one of Athens's ten tribes, through his cult at

17 Dover, 1972, 59–65; P.D. Arnott, 1989, 180–184; Silk in Pelling, 163 and 2000, 246–255; Sifakis, 1971; Styan, 1975 as "non-illusionary." In contrast Freydberg, 2008, 97 sees Philocleon as "morally evolving."

18 McLeish, 180, 127–129 sees no character development: "in Aristophanes [our interest] is in what [the characters] do rather than in what they are" (127; Sifakis, 1992, 134–135), which does not imply characters are "fixed" or "types" (Ussher, 1977a; Sifakis, 1971, 9 and 1992, 134; more generally, Bergson, 1911, 134, 148). For Dionysus in *Frogs* (as C. Segal, 1961) see Chapter Seven. In contrast, as Aristotle, what characters do and say in tragedy aims at the "necessary or probable" (*Poetics* 1454a16) and discontinuity is hidden, as Heath, 1987c, 111–115; Goldhill, 1986, 173–174; Easterling, 1973, 15; Scodel, 1999, 85–111.

19 For Medea's essentially heroic code, Knox, 1979, 295–322; Bongie, 1977, 27–56; McDermott, 1989, 1–2, 48, 54–56; Hopman, 2008; Mueller, 2001; Luschnig, 2007, 8 and n. 2 for sources; and Mastronarde, 2010, 227 on Medea's aristocratic vs. Jason's mercantile language. Foley, 2001, 243–271 argues that this implies a fundamental masculinity (and see Rabinowitz, 1993, 148; Zerba, 2002, 320), Mossman, *Medea*, 31–39 the contrary. Knox, 1979, 297–298 and Gill, 1996, 154–174 point out the parallel to Ajax and Achilles. See Mastronarde, *Medea*, 22–28 and Easterling in Mossman 2003, 189 for Medea as not alienated from the city, and Friedrich in Sommerstein et al., 219–224 for a summary of views.

Salamis, and as the favoring deity of the great Athenian victory there.[20] Medea, in contrast, implies a threat to Theseus and Athens. And finally, Ajax fiercely resists a world of change, while Medea constantly shifts her appearance to suit her interlocutor. As we will see, however, despite their differences, both stand in strong contrast to a comic hero such as Philocleon, as both oppose the changeable world around them, exemplified in the flexible values of Odysseus on the one hand and of Jason on the other, in a challenge made necessary by their own inflexible sense of themselves.[21]

The second major similarity between Ajax and Medea is that both are central to the plays in which they appear.[22] This is not always the case. Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* focuses on the chorus; others tragedies, like *Antigone* and *Hippolytus*, dramatize a conflict between characters; still others, like the *Orestes*, are ensemble pieces.[23] Similarly, not all comedies include a hero as vibrant and all-absorbing as Philocleon. My claim here, accordingly, is not that all tragedy is about the central character, but that when tragedy does focus on a hero or heroine, that character is also given a consistent nature that can be opposed to the surrounding world.[24] In this way also the characters' sense of their own

20 Barker, 2004, 1–2, 5; Finglass, *Ajax*, 6–51, 47 for the Athenian festival for him; and for, nonetheless, the variety of possible attitudes toward Ajax, Poe, 1987, 86–90.

21 On Medea, Luschnig, 2007, 34–35. Valakas in Goldhill and Hall, 198 on Ajax "committing suicide not in his madness, as in the epics, but in full knowledge of the change in himself and the human world, a realization coming as a result of Athena's deception"; Thumiger, 2007, 38 on "a problematizing of the balance between the hero's view of himself and the order implicit in the divine regency of the world"; Evans, 1991, 78–79; Holt, 1992, 329 and 1982 for the "short version" where Ajax commits suicide directly because of his defeat.

22 Garvie, *Ajax*, 131, 237 points out that the basic question throughout is what sort of a man Ajax is (l. 1236), the word *aner* being used 80 times in the play. See also Knox, 1979, 125–126; Hesk, 2003, 134: "Sophocles' characters *are* humanly intelligible and the playwright does evince an interest in the inner life of the person—we keep seeing that Ajax's 'inner life,' although elusive and mysterious, is very much at issue in our play" and 131–136 for an overall consideration. For various assessments of Ajax see Gill, 1996, 204–213; Goldhill, 1988, 18–98; Gould, 1978; Winnington-Ingram, 1980, 11–56. In the case of Medea, Luschnig, 2007, 34–35, 17 n. 23 points out that the play consists entirely of her point of view.

23 Mastronarde, 2010, 65–66.

24 Poe, 1987, 24 points to the doubling of Menelaus and Agamemnon, citing Bergson on tragedy's focus on the singular and individual, comedy's on the multiple and typical (Bergson 3.1, 146–148). In another vein Whitman, 1982, 40–42, 132–159 sees a parallel between the comic and tragic hero in that both, in their own way, validate the individual over society.

integrity involves them in the necessity they face. As we will see, the case is very different with a comic hero like Philocleon.

2.1 *Ajax: The Refusal to Yield*

As has often been pointed out, the essence of Sophocles' Ajax, corresponding to his traditional Homeric role in war, lies in his refusal to yield, even when faced with a world in which certainty seems impossible.[25] In contrast to the "many-turning" Odysseus (*Odys.*, 1.1), who accepts that friends may become enemies and enemies friends (1355–1361), Ajax's long and beautiful speech on yielding (646–692) finally only reveals that he cannot live in such a world. To the yielding of summer to winter and of waking to sleep (a yielding that Ajax, unlike his fellows, does not participate in, 288–291, 670–676), Ajax opposes the fixing of his sword in the earth, a sword that is now, as always, that of his enemy (815–818).[26]

The *Ajax* opens with four radically different views of the hero, those of Athena, Odysseus, the chorus, and Tecmessa. The contrast in point of view emphasizes the place where all four agree, the consistency of Ajax's character and the impossibility of his meshing with a world that is inherently unstable.[27] Athena's brutal demonstration that "a day can sink down and then raise up again / all human concerns" (131) juxtaposed with Odysseus' more sympathetic view that "we, all who live, are no more / than images or an unsubstantial shadow" (125–126) prepares us, despite the horror of our introduction to Ajax, to sympathize with him.[28] In contrast to Athena and Odysseus, the chorus

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25 Knox, 1979, 125–160; Kirkwood, 1994, 60; C. Segal, 1981, 109–111; Cairns in Cairns and Liapis, 99–132; Sorum, 1986, 364 and Barker, 2004 on Ajax's not yielding as a mark of dissent. Golder, 1990, 11–12 points to his traditional role, citing *Iliad* 11.544–560 in particular; Hall, 2013, 315 cites *Iliad* 3.229, 6.5, 7.211.

26 On *xenos* at l. 817, Kane, 1996; Hesk, 2003, 34; Gasti, 1992, 90–92 points out that the sword (unlike the hoplite spear or shield) also implies individual combat, and see C. Segal, 1980, 127–129; Kott, 1973, 64–65.

27 For perspective in the *Ajax*, C. Segal, 1995, 16–25. Sorum, 1986, 378: "Sophocles' Ajax is not a Homeric hero. He is, instead, a reflection of the conflict between the traditional ideal and the fifth-century reality. Homer was the textbook of Athens, the source of cultural assumptions, but the lessons could no longer be applied"; Evans, 1991; Rosenbloom, 2001 and, skeptically, Finglass, *Ajax*, 42–53.

28 Odysseus' pity, unexpected given the reminders of their enmity (18, 43, 78–79, 101–113, 122) prepares the sympathy. See Poe, 1987, 32; Valakas in Goldhill and Hall, 198 on the "unbearable 'zero-degree' of human self-consciousness"; C. Segal, 1998, 6: "The effect reminds [the audience], paradoxically, not of their security as distant, quasi-divine onlookers but of their involvement as mortal participants, capable of human pity which they, like Odysseus

and Tecmessa are *philoi* of Ajax, made alive to the uncertainty of the world through their dependence. The chorus, however, sees Ajax in his public role as their leader, while Tecmessa is associated with Ajax's unseen private world, as is stressed when she unexpectedly emerges in response to the chorus's appeal that Ajax come out from his tent.[29] But despite their very different relations to Ajax, all of these characters have a similar view of him, as a man, huge, frightening, and extreme, thrown into an action that is utterly alien and incomprehensible (21–23, 182–184, 205–207).

The opening also introduces the refusal to yield that is Ajax's most salient characteristic (111–113, 192–194). Tecmessa, like the chorus, does not venture to suggest yielding directly, but instead couches her appeal in terms of Ajax's own code of honor and disgrace (479–482, 505–508), appealing to him through a request not to yield, but to remain steadfast.[30] Only when Ajax bequeaths his helpless son his shield, the symbol of his refusal to give way on the battlefield and of his "savage" nature (548–549, and see also 205, 885, 930), does Tecmessa cry out: "By the gods, be softened!" (594).[31] To which Ajax replies: "You speak like a fool, I think, / if even now you plan to educate my character" (594–595).

Finally only Ajax dares articulate the idea that the chorus and Tecmessa will not state directly: that he should yield. The tone of his final speech to Tecmessa

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and in contrast to Athena, can still feel"; Barker, 2004, 9; Pelling in Pelling, 1990, 247–248 for the empathy as exceptional. Athena's maxim is ingrained in tradition, as *Works and Days* 1–10, Herodotus 1.32, Pindar, *Pythian* 8.95–96, *Agamemnon* 839, 1328; and see Mastronarde, *Medea*, 359.

29 Underlined by her address to the chorus: "Helpers, crew of the ship of Ajax" (201) and theirs to Tecmessa: "spear-captured bedmate" (211). See Heath and Okell, 2007, 367; Garvie, *Ajax*, 138 and 146 for Tecmessa's emergence from the *skene*, not a side-entrance. The revelation of the interior (Garvie, *Ajax*, 157–158) reinforces Tecmessa's identification with Ajax's private world—now exposed for mockery. For her focus on what the hero feels, C. Segal, 1995, 21; for the chorus as sailors, Rose in Goff, 71. Budelmann, 2000, 231–245 points out that the chorus's initial isolation is gradually balanced by an increasingly greater group perspective, in contrast to Ajax, who becomes more and more isolated. See Burton, 1980, 6–40 for a detailed analysis of the chorus's role.

30 Easterling, 1984, 365; Hesk, 2003, 64; Blundell, 1989, 74–77; Garvie, *Ajax*, 169; Zanker, 1992, 22–23. For the change in mood, Garvie, *Ajax*, 176; Poe, 1987, 41–49 for Tecmessa embodying the social restraints Ajax refuses to accept, and see Ormand, 1999, 110–123. For the speech as from Ajax's heart see Knox, 1964, 38. Holt, 1981 sees this as a failed debate, ending with Ajax repeating his original view of honor to Eurysaces.

31 See Holt, 1992, 325 on Ajax's shield "made of seven thicknesses of oxhide, which he carries before him "like a tower" and which covers his entire body" as basic and a holdover from his Mycenaean origin.

is extraordinary: "For even I, terrible once in my strength / as dipped iron, am made female in my words / in regard to this woman here" (650–652); "Therefore we shall know for the rest, to the gods / to yield, and we will learn to reverence the Atreidae" (666–667); "For even what is terrible and most strong / yields to honors" (669–670). This speech, often called the "deception speech," creates a paradox. Ajax is the hero most like Achilles, and Achilles is famous for his pointed remark to Odysseus that "hateful to me as the gates of hell / is a man who hides one thing in his heart, and speaks another" (*Iliad* 9.312–313).[32] As it is not in Ajax's nature either to yield or to lie, a speech in which Ajax claims to yield seems impossible.[33]

Given such an impasse, it seems best to turn from the character to the audience's likely response.[34] Ajax's sudden and entirely unexpected yielding can only come as a shock to the audience. But as the audience tries to reconcile this Ajax with the Ajax they know, Sophocles gives us the speech's first clearly ironic passage. As it is a given of Ajax's story, since the *Odyssey*, that he will commit suicide, and as numerous vases depicted the hero fixing his sword in the earth for this purpose, the audience cannot help but understand the true meaning of Ajax's declaration that he goes to escape the wrath of the goddess and "bury" his sword where Hades may keep it (654–660).[35] The same effect occurs at the close of the speech:

32 Golder, 1990, 12 points out this contrast between Odysseus and Achilles, while "to Ajax, who has spoken bluntly of honor and friendship, Achilles replies, 'You have spoken, Ajax, like a man after my own heart' (9.645)." For Ajax as Homeric see Gasti, 1992; Zanker, 1992; Gill, 1996, 205–209; Easterling, 1984.

33 As Gellie, 1972, 12; Poe, 1987, 50–71 and 51–52 against an argument that consistency is not expected; Knox, 1979, 135 ff., sees most of the speech as soliloquy, with the decision to die made only at the end, and see Sicherl, 1977. For various views, C. Segal, 1981, 113–115; Winnington-Ingram, 1980, 46–54; Whitman, 1966, 74–75; Moore, 1977; Gill, 1996, 205–215; Hesk, 2003, 174–195; Buxton, 1984, 27–28; and Garvey, *Ajax* 184–186 for a survey. As Knox points out, there is no practical need for the deception, as Poe, 1987, 59–60.

34 Golder, 1990, 21: "Here and only here Ajax speaks with two voices. But these are not voices of uncertainty. Rather, we see two Ajaxes: one Ajax who recognizes the law of change by which all else lives and dies; another Ajax who will act in accord with the absolute law of his own nature"; Seaford, 1994, 394–400 sees the meaning as ritualistically "half concealed" and see Hesk, 2003, 86–89 for an evaluation. On the ambiguity, Ferguson, 1970; Goldhill, 1986, 189–192; Easterling, 1977, 126 as psychologically realistic. Gibert, 1995, 120–135 similarly sees not deception, but a search.

35 For the vases Finglass, *Ajax*, 28–31; March, 1989; Hesk, 2003, 18 and 164 n. 4. Golder, 1990, 24–25 points out that the visual effect of the "buried" sword would be as a sundial, emphasizing the theme of time.

For I myself will go there where it is needful to travel (*poreuteon*)
and you, you must do that which I say, and perhaps quickly
you may learn, that even if now I suffer in fortune, I am saved.
690–692

The audience, unlike Tecmessa and the chorus, cannot fail to see that the "salvation" Ajax anticipates is one that will come from his own hands.

But while these passages in Ajax's speech are clearly ironic, the central section is not. In contrast to the distance that dramatic irony creates between audience and action, Ajax's extraordinary description of all the world yielding, winter to summer, night to day, sea to winds, sleep to waking (670–676), is all-absorbing. The beauty of the description makes, I would argue, a direct impact on the audience, and as such conveys in itself an understanding that yielding is fundamental to the cosmos. But as the focus shifts from universals back to Ajax—"I, at any rate, must. For I know finally that / an enemy is to be our enemy only so far / as he may again be a friend" (678–683)—the speech also moves back to irony, in the claim that all will be well (684) and the command that Tecmessa pray that "what my heart longs for come to completion" (686). Sophocles thus creates in the audience a sense both of the truth of the vision and of the impossibility that Ajax will accept it.[36]

Ajax's inflexibility in the face of a world of change positions him as the opposite of an Aristophanic hero. His growing isolation from those around him, an isolation that will culminate, after the extraordinary departure of the chorus, in the emphatic visual effect of Ajax alone onstage, brings out a similar contrast.[37] Dikaiopolis and Philocleon are untouched by their isolation; Ajax is tied to the increasing impossibility of reconciling his inner self and the world around him.

The sequence of characters who express concern for Ajax—Odysseus, the chorus, Tecmessa, the messenger, and, in the messenger's speech, Calchas—

36 Seaford, 1994, 395–396 and 401–402 compares Heraclitus' juxtaposition of an apparent and an actual meaning. Winnington-Ingram, 1980, 45–56 sees Ajax as realizing and rejecting a new understanding; Simpson, 1969 as experiencing a fundamental change; and see Kirkwood, 1994, 160–162; Reinhardt, 1979, 9–33, esp. 24–25 and in E. Segal, 1983, 157–162.

37 P.D. Arnott, 1962, 131–133; Ringer, 1998, 45–46; and see Finglass, *Ajax*, 11 ff., arguing against Scullion, 1994, 89–128 and Heath and Oknell, 2007, 371–372 for a change in location. Gasti, 1992, 84 points to the frequency with which the word *monos* is used of Ajax, as 29, 47, 294, 467, 1276, 1283; Poe, 1987, 67–71 to Ajax's vivid images of nature as distancing him from human society. See Whitman, 1966, 64, 73; C. Segal, 1981, 112; Holt, 1980, 26. Blundell, 1989, 60–105 and Poe, 1987, 44–45 point to Ajax's focus on himself rather than others.

increases our sympathy for the hero, but also reveals how absolutely Ajax has cut himself off from others. Where Odysseus shows himself sympathetic to Ajax, Ajax regards him throughout, as an "instrument of evil, filthiest knave of the army" (380–381). The two people Ajax calls on in his first lines (339, 342) are two that cannot help him: his son, a toddler (542), and Teucer, who, as he knows (563–564), is absent. He addresses the chorus as the only ones loyal to him (349, 406, his only use of the word *philos* in the play), yet asks only that they help him die (361).[38] And despite the chorus's introduction of Tecmessa as the object of Ajax's constant affection (212), his response to her is consistently one of dismissal (292–293, 369, 578–580, 586–596).

Ajax's scene with his son ties his isolation to his need to maintain his integrity. As has been observed, the scene, in which Ajax, like Hector, looks to a time after his death when his wife will serve his enemies (496–505, 6.454–465), echoes Hector's scene with Andromache in *Iliad* 6.[39] But although Hector finally prays that his son may become greater than his father, he also recognizes the inevitability of change: "For I know well in my heart and my mind / that a day shall come when holy Ilium shall perish / and Priam, and the people of Priam, of the strong ash spear" (6.447–449). Ajax, in contrast, sees only that his son must carry on both his nature and his shield, a shield that Eurysaces' name ("broad-shield") determines for him, just as Ajax's name determines his suffering (574–575, 430–431).[40] The isolation implicit in this firmness comes out in the very different ends of the scenes: Hector, if only for a moment, can remove his helmet and laugh with his wife (6.471–473). Ajax cannot.

The link between Ajax's fixed character and his isolation appears finally in the messenger's account of his rejecting even the help of the gods (758–777). Sophocles joins this report to the sympathy of both the messenger and even Calchas (749–752), which makes it unlikely that he is invoking this to explain the action of the play, particularly as Sophocles has delayed the report until both our sympathy with Ajax and our sense of his character have been firmly

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38 Blundell, 1989, 72 n. 62; Garvie, *Ajax*, 158–159 on 349–350 points to the interplay with the repeated *monos*, and see Goldhill, 1986, 79 for *philos* and *echthros* generally. Lines 405–406 are dubious, as Finglass, *Ajax*, 257–260; Garvie, *Ajax*, 163; Stanford, *Ajax*, 113.

39 Ajax's links to Hector (661–662, 815–818, 1029–1033, 1283–1287) suggest an echo of Hector's famous "War is a care for men" (6.490–493), as Hesk, 2003, 67; Seaford, 1994, 400–401; Evans, 1991, 74–75; Sorum, 1986, 369–371. For Hector's smile compared to Ajax's smile of bloodlust at *Iliad* 7.212 see Halliwell, 2008, 53–58.

40 For Ajax's name, Garvie, *Ajax*, 165 and Chapter One; for Eurysaces, Gasti, 1992, 91–92. Ajax also, unlike Hector, cannot envision his son becoming greater than himself (*Iliad* 6.479–480; *Ajax* 550–551).

established.[41] As a result, the report does not so much establish guilt in Ajax as it pushes our sense of his independence to the extreme, and past the point where it seems possible for such a character to operate in the world.

Through his continual focus on Ajax, Sophocles interweaves the hero's insistence on his own integrity with the necessity he encounters, always expanding the interrelation between the two. While Ajax remains fixed, the necessity takes on a number of varying forms, from the human through to the absolute. In his first appearance, emerging from his "agonistic leisure" (194), Ajax is in the position of Achilles, caught between his need to fight, since the meaning of his existence is as a warrior, and the impossibility of aiding those who are now his enemies (466–469). Ajax, however, does not have the ties to others, Patroclus and then Priam, that bring Achilles out of his isolation, since for Ajax even his connection to his father, based on his role as a warrior, is gone.[42]

From a focus on human necessity, Sophocles moves to the more impersonal necessity implied by the oracle, which here serves to set Ajax against no less a force than time.[43] The theme, echoing from Athena's statement that a single day can sink or raise a man, to Ajax's "All things great and numberless, time / brings forth from the unseen, and appearing hides them again" (131–132, 646–647), to the chorus's misguided hope that, since "all things great time extinguishes and also kindles," Ajax too has yielded (714–718), culminates in the revelation that Athena's enmity will last only for the course of a day: if Ajax remains in his tent he can weather the storm (752–757). The message, of course, has come too late. Time has won.

The final necessity that Sophocles connects to Ajax's sense of his own integrity stems from dramatizing a story whose ending is already known. Just as their knowledge of Ajax's suicide enables the audience to see the irony in his "deception speech," their knowledge of Ajax's hero cults makes it clear, in the

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41 In contrast Finglass, *Ajax*, 54 "By holding back this vital detail Sophocles ensures the partial and gradual revelation of a major aspect of his plot." See Gasti, 1992, 92–93; Evans, 1991, 72; Hesk, 2003, 141–148; Garvie, *Ajax*, 14–15 and 196–197, including a bibliography. The first scene, however, invites us to group Athena's enmity with Odysseus', while even in Ajax's "Do you not know that I / am bound to assist the gods no longer?" (589–590) the final "no longer" (*eti*) assumes such service as normal.

42 See Sorum, 1986, 376 and overall for the parallel to Achilles; Barker, 2004, 3–7; Poe, 1987, 90–98; Hesk, 2003, 61; Finlay, 1980; Zanker, 1992, 25 for the connection to *Iliad* 24.

43 Knox, 1979, 150; Rosenmeyer, 1963, 181; Goward, 1999, 88–91 sees the deception speech and the messenger's news as contrasting "a new view *sub specie aeternitatis*" (91) to the immediate urgency. C. Segal, 1995, 25 points to the tension between the timelessness of the legend and the time within it.

second half of the play, that Ajax will not be left unburied and dishonored, however surprising they may have found it that Odysseus is the means to that end.[44] In this way Sophocles is able to maintain, throughout the drama, the dominance of Ajax's sense of self, even as the hero is apparently overwhelmed by the forces that surround him.

In the *Ajax*, then, the necessity that entraps the tragic hero emerges simply because he is determinately himself, the greatest of the Achaeans after Achilles (441–444, 1339–1341, 1379–4, *Iliad* 17.279–280; *Odys*. 11.469–470, 24.17–18).[45] As his "deception speech" makes clear, he can see the pervasiveness, and even in some sense the beauty, of a world where all things alternate and bend to what surrounds them. It is not, however, his world and, as Sophocles implies by his parallels to the *Iliad*, it is not the world of the traditional hero. Were Ajax to yield he would no longer be Ajax, and he would no longer be, as he is for the brief time between Achilles' death and his own, the essence of the hero, the greatest of the Achaeans.

2.2 *Medea and* **Medea***: A Personal Necessity*

While Medea, like Ajax, is driven by an inner determination, she also, like a comic hero, has a chameleonlike ability to adapt to the situation around her. Unlike a comic character, however, the multiple ways in which Medea appears onstage, and the multiple ways in which her "otherness" invites the audience to see her, all finally direct our attention to the even greater complexity within Medea herself.[46] In contrast, as we will see with Philocleon, the multiple ways in which the comic hero is seen points not to a complexity in his character, but to the multiple roles that make up our social reality.

It would be surprising if Euripides' *Medea* did not have some effect on Aristophanes. Since we know neither the date of the *Ajax* nor when Aristophanes was born, we cannot know if Aristophanes saw the play performed. But we do know that Euripides' *Medea* was produced in 431, when Aristophanes was only four years away from his first theatrical attempt. It is hard to imagine that he was not in the audience. And while the play's concentration on a single central character is unusual for Euripides, the intensity of its characterization is not.[47]

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44 Even in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is sympathetic to the shade of Ajax, but can't hang around all day waiting for him (11.565–567). In contrast Finglass, *Ajax*, 40–41 cites the *Little Iliad*, but even here Ajax is buried, though as a sign of disrespect.

45 Woodford and Loudon, 1980; Michelakis, 2002, 144–150; O'Higgins, 1989. For the inevitable instability of "second-best" see Holt, 1992, 330–331; Stanford, *Ajax*, xiv–xviii.

46 Mossman, *Medea*, 44–45 and, in contrast, see Zerba, 2002; Gellie, 1988, 19.

47 As Knox, 1964, 3.

Nor is it, in this respect, unlike other tragedies produced during Aristophanes' young manhood, such as Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos* and *Women of Trachis*, or Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Hecuba*, all of which, judging by the references that Aristophanes makes to them, had a significant impact on the young playwright.

Euripides calls attention to Medea's intensity and complexity from the very first. The contrast between her furious cries from the stage building, which confirm the nurse's fears, and her rational, even understated speech to the chorus prepares us for the rest of the play. Unlike Ajax, we do not primarily learn about Medea in her absence; in fact, after her first appearance, she does not leave the stage until nearly the end of the play.[48] Instead the various views of Medea that we are given are her own, as she manipulates each person who comes on stage by matching herself to his or her preconception.[49] With the chorus she suffers the injustice done to all women (214–266); with Creon she is distrusted but helpless, subservient, and focused on her children (292–347); with Jason she is a rejected, infuriated lover and then a submissive wife (465–626, 774–779, 869–975); and with Aegeus she is an equal comrade (665–758).[50]

Although Medea describes these presentations as deceptions (368–375, 776–783), they all contain some truth as well. If the injustice she describes to the chorus does not apply to Medea, who extraordinarily contracted her own marriage, she is the victim of a similar injustice.[51] Although she refuses to accept it,

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48 She leaves to kill the children, 150 lines from the play's end. Mastronarde, 2010, 252–253 contrasts her taking over the public space to Clytemnestra, who takes over the *oikos* only to be trapped within it.

49 To the extent of replacing scenes of three actors with a protagonist and a series of interlocutors, as Hall, 2010, 241. On Medea "playing" her feminine self see Foley, 2001, 258–264; Luschnig, 2007, 177 ff. for her ability, essentially, to create herself; McClure, 1999b for her manipulation of feminine and masculine conventions of language; Conacher, 1967, 188 ff. and 1972 for the contrast to her opening cries; Boedeker, 1991, 109: "Medea as we have seen behaves as author or director of her own story, as she frequently plans, rehearses, or comments on her own speech, and directs the words and actions of other characters as well." Mastronarde, *Medea*, 11 points to a double-sided audience reception, as manipulation, but also as the response of a wronged woman and see Pucci, 1980 for the complexity of language in the play overall.

50 Dunkle, 1969, 99–101. Her ability to dissemble gives Medea an aura almost of the uncanny, particularly set against, for example, Aegeus' assumption of honesty (731 ff.). See Rabinowitz, 1993, 145; Rehm, 1989; Hopman, 2008; Buttrey, 1958 for Aegeus and his oath at the center of the play, surrounded by a careful ring structure.

51 As in her "bitter and defiant ventriloquism of the male view" (Mastronarde, 2010, 272): "we women, born by nature / most incapable of noble acts / are, of all evils, the most wise contrivers" (407–409), and see Luschnig, 2007, 189. Flory, 1978, 70 points out that

she is deeply aware of the danger of being helpless, as in her almost obsessive refusal to be laughed at (383, 398, 404, 797, 1049, 1355, 1362).[52] While she despises Jason, her appeal to "the great love that worked much between us two" (871) provides a background for the intensity of her hatred.[53] And while her grasp of Aegeus' hand is less than straightforward, she clearly sees herself as precisely this, an equal ally within a strict code of honor. Most of all, Medea reflects the truth when, in her most explicitly duplicitous performance, she tells Jason that she has been "conversing with herself and railing at herself" (872–873).

Thus, while Medea is a master of disguise, her falsehoods tend to point, as often in tragedy, to a deeper inner reality. That inner reality also proves to be the only necessity that she encounters.[54] *Medea* opens by picturing its heroine as the victim of Jason and Creon (16–26), but it gradually becomes apparent that her crucial struggle is with herself.[55] From our first learning of it (364ff.), Medea's determination to be revenged expands until it takes over the play. Her own resolution (389–400), the frightening ease with which she manipulates Creon and Jason, and the provident appearance of Aegeus as a means of escape (386–389, 663ff.), all create a sense that the revenge glides seamlessly to its fulfillment.[56] As a result it is not the practical obstacles to revenge, but Medea's internal conflict that commands our attention, particularly, and inevitably, once the means of her revenge, the murder of her own children, is revealed.[57]

"The pledges (possibly with a handclasp) attendant upon a betrothal passed between prospective groom and father-in-law, not between man and woman."

52 Part, as in Ajax's similar concern (79, 153, 198, 304, 367, 382, 454, 989, 1043), of the heroic code, as Blundell, 1989, 62 with sources; Halliwell, 2008, 25–27; Lawrence, 1997, 51: "her determination to silence the laughter of her enemies puts her in the company of the male heroes of Greek legend." Mossman, *Medea*, 32–35, 253–254 argues against identifying this as primarily masculine.

53 Resonating with Jason's view that sexual jealousy motivates her (555–557, 568–572 and see 1365–1368); Mossman, *Medea*, 47, 363, as opposed to Bongie, 1977, 28, 39 and Burnett, 1998, 194–195.

54 Mossman, *Medea*, 28: "This is not a play in which character is subordinate to action: on the contrary, the characters of Medea and Jason really drive the plot, and the climactic filicide is very much a product of their characters, not dictated by myth or literary precedent." See also Luschnig, 2007, 3 and, for other versions of the myth, Mastronarde, *Medea*, 44–64; Mossman, *Medea*, 14–28; Moreau, 1994; Graf in Clauss and Johnston, 21–43.

55 For Medea's slaying of the princess as a destruction of her former self see Hopman, 2008, 164; Boedecker in Clauss and Johnston, 143–144.

56 In fact (as Mastronarde, *Medea*, 298–299) events move too quickly for Medea to poison the robe, a lapse that passes unnoticed.

57 The effect would be overwhelming if, as many scholars think, the murder was unexpect-

The *Medea* gradually makes it clear that the necessity of the play stems finally from Medea herself. The issues raised by the nurse's initial fears, and by Medea's desire to implicate the gods alongside herself (1013–1014), lead to the conflict she feels between her sense of herself as a mother and her sense of her own dignity (1040–1050).[58] Her contradictory attempts to see the children's death as necessary (1059–1063, 1236–1241) also reinforce our sense that the necessity lies within herself. Medea, throughout, knows that she can leave Corinth with her children, as Creon ordered (271–274, 1045), just as she can leave with their bodies.[59] As she acknowledges, it is her own vision of herself, and her insistence that others share that vision, that compels her to revenge (395–406, 1049–1052).[60] Her declaration to the chorus remains the simple truth: "I can do no other thing" (814, and see 1078–1080, 1342).

Just as the necessity that binds Medea is purely internal, so also is her suffering.[61] In contrast to tragic characters like Oedipus, Hippolytus, or Hecuba, whose confrontations with necessity destroy them, Medea exits the play mounted, in the place of Euripides' usual *deus ex machina*, on the chariot of the Sun, with an external impunity that a comic character could only dream of.[62] And yet she sees, as she has seen throughout, that her life will be contin-

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ed. McDermott, 1989, 9–24 argues for Euripides as introducing the killing; for Euripides or Neophron as first see McHardy in McHardy, et al., 2005, 136–141; Mastronarde, *Medea*, 49–53, 57–64. Holland, 1974, 262–263 and *passim* points to filicide as an element of the curse on Jason's house.

58 For the contention as not between reason and passion, see Lawrence, 1997, 52; Mossman, *Medea*, 329–332; Foley, 2001, 243–271. For the internal conflict, Gibert, 1995, 79–84; Gill, 1996, 216–222 and in McHardy et al., 2005 on ancient views; for the debate on whether the lines are genuine Seidensticker in Griffith and Mastronarde; Reeve, 1972; Kovacs, 1986; Mastronarde, *Medea*, 388–397; Mossman, *Medea*, 317–318.

59 For Medea being able to take the bodies, but not the children from Corinth, see McDermott, 1989, 57–58; Collinge, 1962, 172, n. 2; Reeve, 1972, 51–61; Kovacs, 1986, esp. 343. See Mastronarde, *Medea*, 341 on 1062–1063, identical to 1238–1241, preferring the later passage.

60 Medea's "at any rate, it is necessary that they die" (1062 = 1240) thus projects her own resolution; Lawrence, 1997, 53: "Now that she has effectively removed all her opposition, only Medea can oppose her own resolve"; Schlesinger, in E. Segal, 1983, 295: "Medea is determined to act; she has not merely thought of it, nor has she struggled to the decision. In a sense the revenge is imposed upon her by her own nature"; Burian in Easterling 1997, 181: "For Ajax to yield to his enemies, for Medea to accept Jason's new marriage, would be to deny or negate their very natures"; Conacher, 1967, 195: "Medea herself is really the only one capable of resisting Medea"; Foley, 2001, 243: "despite her apparent helplessness, Medea has no effective opponents in this play but herself."

61 Mossman, *Medea*, 41; Knox, 1979, 301.

62 For the echo of Euripides' usual *deus ex machina* ending, Cunningham, 1954; Collinge, 1962,

ual torment (791, 818–819, 929–931, 967–968, 1008 ff., 1036–1037, 1047, 1249–1250, 1361–1362).[63] The suffering may even be the result of her inner conflict, if, as it appears, she must kill her children because they are her last link to Jason, and because she loves them.[64]

The approach to necessity that Euripides takes in the *Medea* is extreme not because he locates the necessity of the play within the central character, but because he locates it *only* there. More often tragedy locates necessity both inside and outside the main characters, often doubling divine and human causation.[65] A tragedy such as the *Hippolytus*, for example, plays with this "double determination," as it is often termed, by juxtaposing the divine figures of Aphrodite and Artemis with the intensely psychological depictions of Phaedra and Hippolytus.[66] A more usual version appears in the *Seven against Thebes*, where Oedipus' curse, fulfilled in the impersonal falling out of a lot, calls forth an *orge* or passion (678, 715) in Eteocles that serves as the inner correlative to the outer necessity.[67] Similarly, in a classic case, when Agamemnon decides

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170–172; Easterling in Mossman, 199; Knox, 1989, 295–322; Friedrich in Sommerstein et al., 220 for the scandal.

63 Underlined by her use of *luei* (1362) not as "release" but as "is profitable," Mastronarde, *Medea*, 382; Mills, 1980, 295 on Procne and the eternal weeping Medea foresees; McDermott, 1989, 5–6 and *passim* for the violation of maternal care as disturbing the order of the cosmos.

64 As in the hints that she must destroy the children as her last tie to Jason (112–114; 116–117; 870–871, 894–898, 1361–1362, 1397–1398); Mastronarde, 2010, 298: "Medea has utterly erased her marriage with him by destroying the children born of it"; Gill, 1996, 154–157; Musurillo, 1966; Flory, 1978, 72–74 on the children grasping Jason's right hand at 894 ff., as Medea bids them, recalling the marriage vow he has broken.

65 For the extensive bibliography see Lesky, 1961 and 1966; Mastronarde, 2010, 201–202; Parker and Griffith in Griffith et al., 2009, 156–157; Easterling in Pelling, 1990, 83–99; Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 49–84; Sommerstein, 1996b, 366–374; Ewans in Silk, 440: "a *moira* gradually takes shape as the drama unfolds from beginning, through middle, to end, as a result of the actions of human beings who are perceived as choosing freely"; Mogyorodi in Silk, 370: "The real complicity of freedom and necessity consists in the paradox that without the act of 'appropriation,' necessity does not manifest itself with all its mythical profundity."

66 Hall, 2010, 250–251 and see 2013, 304–305 for Oedipus attributing his deed to himself and Apollo.

67 Brown, 1977, 313–318; Hutchinson, *Seven*, 149–150: "The Erinys works both against and through his real personality, a personality which is vividly felt in this scene. We watch the interaction of the human and the divine, not so much intrigued by the philosophy as compelled by the fact." In contrast Thalmann, 1978 sees Eteocles as taken over by the curse.

on the sacrifice of his daughter, Iphigenia, Aeschylus describes him as entering into his action in spirit as well as in body:

> And when he had put on the yoke-strap of necessity
> his spirit veered, unholy,
> impious, impure, whence
> he changed to an all-daring mind.
> *Agam.* 218–221

Not only Agamemnon's change of spirit, but also the *lepadnon* or "yoke-strap," which is Aeschylus' image for necessity, reveals the inter-involvement here of self and necessity. The yoke-strap, by which the oxen pull the plow, itself moves nothing; it serves only as the instrument that, by harnessing the oxen, directs their force to an end that is not their own. Similarly, Agamemnon is pictured not as a puppet of the gods, but as himself a motive force, although within a greater whole that he can only partially understand.[68]

In locating the suffering, the necessity, and the essential conflict of the *Medea* within the heroine, Euripides pushed a general tendency in tragedy to the extreme. In contrast, the kinds of necessity that the comic hero confronts—debt, politics, war, or the courts—are purely external. And while the hero may be thwarted by these forces, he is not internally affected—in vivid contrast, for example, to Euripides' experiments with a purely external necessity in plays like the *Hecuba* or *Trojan Women*.[69] Unlike their tragic counterparts, comic heroes live in an atmosphere of licensed abuse. Not only do they not suffer any consequences from their actions, in general they do not suffer at all.[70] In this respect, perhaps ironically, they exhibit something like the pure autonomy that, as an unachievable goal, lies in the background of both the *Ajax* and the *Medea*.

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68 See Denniston and Page, *Agamemnon*, xx–xxix; Lloyd-Jones, 1962 argues that Agamemnon is not free and so not responsible; Peradetto, 1969 that he is. For other views Ewans, 1995; Hammond, 1965; Dodds, 1960 and Conacher, 1987, 85–92 for an overview.

69 Arrowsmith, 1999, 208.

70 E. Segal, 2001, 77 quotes Bentley: "In farce as in dreams one is permitted the outrage and spared the consequences." The failure of *Clouds* has been attributed to its not following this pattern, making it more like a tragedy than a comedy. See Hose, 1995; Whitman, 1964, 129; Hubbard, 1991, 112; C. Segal, 1969, 154: "The reversal of the Clouds at 1454 ff. is only one item in a whole series of carefully calculated reversals which make the ending seem like the *peripeteia* of a tragedy."

3 *Wasps*: The Hero as Chameleon

> A rabbi, a priest, and a minister were discussing when human life begins. The minister said it was at viability. The priest said it was at conception. Finally they turned to the rabbi and asked when he thought life began. "When does life begin?" said the rabbi. "When does life begin? Life begins when the children leave home and the dog dies."

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Unlike Ajax or Medea, Philocleon, the hero of Aristophanes' *Wasps*, is not bound by consistency of character, by his past, or by concern for the views of others. For him, beginning a new life is as simple as it is for the rabbi above. But there is also an ambivalence this implies. While Philocleon is able, over the course of the play, to free himself from every tie that binds him, in so doing, as we will see, he also releases himself from the ties that gave him his identity in the first place.

In a paradox that we will explore at the end of this chapter, a comic figure like Philocleon can be constituted entirely by his social roles, unconstrained by either a need for consistency or any inner self, and still be entirely independent from society. The features common to the *Medea* and the *Wasps*, produced eight years after Euripides' tragedy, bring this out. *Wasps* is Aristophanes' first extant play to parody the "mania" motif developed in plays such as the *Hippolytus* and the *Medea*.[71] In addition, in *Wasps*, as in the *Medea*, the protagonist distances himself from city and family, choosing the assertion of his own will over his connection to others.[72] In the *Medea*, the heroine, unusually for tragedy, is a shape-shifter, and one who works primarily through words rather than her traditional witchcraft. Philocleon, a shape-shifter as well, also uses the nearly magic power he has discovered in amusing stories to free himself from all entanglements (565–566, 1258–1259, 1382–1449).

Here, however, the similarities end. While Medea's use of words reveals her intense awareness of how she is viewed, Philocleon's stories make no attempt to connect with the person addressed (as 1320–1321) and reveal only his complete

71 As Harvey, 1971, 362–365; Sidwell, 1990. Ruffell, 2002, 162 sees a capping of Cratinus' *Wineflask* as well.

72 Friedrich in Sommerstein et al.: "Medea has cut off her last bond to the ethical universe of the *polis*" (236).

lack of concern with anything outside of himself. The difference speaks to the most basic characteristic of the comic hero. For both Ajax and Medea, the possibility of ridicule is the ultimate threat to their identities. But a comic hero like Philocleon is on stage exactly to be laughed at. The result is a very different sense of identity, and a complete, but also a very particular, form of freedom.

3.1 *From Juror to Free Spirit*

As we have seen in the case of the *Acharnians*, Athenian comedy is not primarily about the central character. This is also true of the *Wasps*. While, as we will see in the second half of this section, Aristophanes does play with the implications of Philocleon's ability to shift roles, the primary use he makes of his switch from the jury-obsessed Cleon-follower of the first half of the play to the comic free spirit of the second concerns the law courts.[73] This emerges in the way Aristophanes chooses to emphasize Philocleon's inconsistency, by bringing three of his victims onstage, *seriatim*, to serve summons, only to have the ex-juror respond with complete contempt for the courts (1335–1341, 1367, etc.). And it appears in the single quality, a desire for power, that Aristophanes points to as the basis of both of Philocleon's roles.

Aristophanes brings out the contrast between Philocleon's various roles through his use of a central motif, escape. Philocleon's determination to allow no "escape" (the regular term for "acquittal") to those prosecuted before him (157–160, 558, 562, 571, 994, 997, etc.) has a physical correlative onstage in the net thrown over the stage building (131–132, 164, 367), a feature bound to draw the audience's attention. Here, however, it is Philocleon who is prevented from escaping.[74] The challenge this poses (not unlike trying to keep a cat inside a wet

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73 Wohl in Revermann, 333: "In the play's exaggerated antithesis, one is either juror or criminal, and when Philocleon throws away his voting urns (1339) he throws away *nomos* altogether"; Silk, 2000, 247: "the lawless Philocleon of the latter scenes is almost the binary opposite of the legalistic Philocleon of the first half of the play." For *Wasps* as two discontinuous halves, Konstan, 1985, 27–46 and 1995, 15–28; Schwinge, 1975, 35–47; Olson, 1996 for a "sleight of hand" (129) unifying the play and a focus on the political. Bowie, 1993, 78–101, as Slater, 1996 (and see 2002, 86–111) ascribes the shift to a theme of *ephebeia*, which Sommerstein, 2009, 192–203 rightly counters; see MacDowell, 1995, 170 n. 33 for views of ritual change. For the success of the portrait, Gomme, 1962, 79: "a triumph of characterization, one of the best comic figures in literature"; and, as often, MacDowell, 1995, 178: "The characterization of Philocleon is excellent, but its purpose is amusement, not psychological truth."

74 The chart of legal terms in Willi, 2003, 73–76 makes the conceptual relation of law to "capture" and "escape" clear, as *apopheugo*, "be acquitted," *haliskomai*, "be convicted," *aphiemi*, "acquit" or "let escape" (Willi 78, as *Wasps* 922). See also Buis in Fontaine and

cardboard box) is echoed in Labes' later escape from the household trial and, after the *parabasis*, in Philocleon's escape from every constraint placed upon him. The result is a tripartite structure: Philocleon's attempted escape from his house and son (1–470), the *agon* and Labes' escape from prosecution (471–1008), and finally Philocleon's escape from any restraint at all (1122–1537).[75] The structure also emphasizes the discontinuity: in the first part of the play, Philocleon is determined to prevent others from escaping the law; in the second he himself is doing just that.

What lies beneath these opposite depictions comes out in the contrast between Philocleon and the chorus. The chorus is introduced in a situation deliberately parallel to Philocleon's, obsessed (as emphasized by their persona as wasps) by a desire to convict (106–110, 240–245) and in conflict with the "son" who leads them. But as the chorus goes on to lament their poverty, it becomes clear that what jury duty primarily means to them is the three obols a day that they earn by it, and with which they will purchase their dinner (300–311). For Philocleon, in contrast, the money is largely irrelevant, as we see both in his claim to have "contempt for wealth" (duly noted by Bdelycleon, 575, 576) and in his son's plan simply to pay Philocleon's wages himself (783–786).[76] The benefit of the pay for Philocleon, as in his delight at his daughter's attempts to wheedle the jury fee from him (605–612), is not the money itself, but rather what money brings with it, which is power.

The issues that Philocleon raises in his defense of jury service, from his delight in rejecting the pleas of the accused to his pleasure in "unsealing" an heiress (583–586), all reflect a single central theme: his enjoyment of power. The focus of his argument is accordingly the rule (*arche*) that jury service gives, a rule, he declares, no less than that of Zeus himself (619). Correspondingly, the only element of his son's argument that Philocleon responds to is the claim that the jurors seem to have power, but are actually slaves of the politicians who lead

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Scafuro, 324; Freydberg, 2008, 64–65 and Konstan, 1995, 16–17 on containment, theft, and escape in the two halves. For psychological escape, Reckford, 1977, and 1987, 234 for Philocleon as a parody of the imprisoned Danae.

75 The *Clouds* (of the year before) similarly breaks into three parts: 1–626, Strepsiades' introduction to Socrates and *parabasis*; 627–1130, Strepsiades' failed studies, *agon*, second *parabasis*; 1131–1511, results.

76 Konstan, 1995, 15–28, who is unusual in noting this, points to a class difference between Philocleon and the chorus (as 1985, 44–45). However, the play sets up an initial similarity between Philocleon and the chorus, while line 80: "that disease affects only gentlemen" implies a more usual lower-class hero. Olson, 1996 argues against Konstan although, I believe, on the wrong grounds.

them (681–697).[77] The word "slavery" in his son's speech becomes as much an object of fixation for Philocleon as the word "rule" was in his own. As he declares (attempting once more to exert his will): "Stop talking about slavery; I am the ruler of everyone!" (*paue douleian legōn—ostis archo tōn hapantōn*, 517).

In the case of both Philocleon and the chorus, it is the cure that brings out most clearly the true nature of the disease. Because money is their main concern, the chorus is convinced by the argument that Athens's wealth, which should go to the ordinary citizens, is being pocketed instead by the politicians (725–735). Philocleon, in contrast, is concerned with power, and so is won over only by the proposal that he establish a household law court and so replace public with private control.[78] And because his concern is power, it takes a loss of control, when he accidentally acquits a defendant, to turn him away from the courts. Given his failure to assert his will in his own private court, the natural move is to an assertion of will in more individual circumstances. That these circumstances now involve breaking the law rather than enforcing it is of little concern to the hero.

This is the main focus of Philocleon's change in character. The first half of the *Wasps* frustrates Philocleon's impulse to assert himself through the law courts. The second half shows him taking a more direct route to the same end. As hinted in Philocleon's and the chorus's loving references to their young and lawless days (235–239, 354–355, 555–557), the life force that focused on the courts in the first half of the play required only Philocleon's drunkenness to emerge and be transferred to the private sector in the second.[79] The human

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77 See Slater, 2002, 91 for the shock, as jury service (limited to citizens) is the mark of a free man; Raaflaub, 2004, 211–219 for law courts increasingly defining Athenian democracy.

78 Despite Olson (1996, 136): "Philocleon acts as if a veil has been torn from his eyes" (at 696–697, 713–714), he still refuses to give up jury duty at 760–766; Slater, 2002, 95 points out that Philocleon's move to a household court "demonstrates how completely the emotional gratification of judging is all that matters to him. There is not now and apparently has never been any belief on his part that his jury duty served any real social purpose"; Harriot, 1986, 40: "the chief impression made by the opening of Philocleon's defense is the glee felt by a poor and powerless man when given authority." Although A.M. Bowie, 1993, 100 sees jurors caricatured as officious, Philocleon cares only about convicting a defendant, not what he convicts him *for*. In the *Acharnians* as well two different arguments convince two different audiences, Chapter Three.

79 Silk, 2000, 251 for the thieving as evidence of Philocleon's discontinuous or "recreative" character; Sutton, 1993, 22 as a new outlet, also implied by Dover, 1972, 125–127; for Halliwell, 1998, xxvii, "what he loses by way of power over others in the courts he more than makes up for in the rampant and irrepressible sensuality of his new social life." Similarly, Henderson, *Clouds*, *Wasps*, *Peace*, 218: "Clearly the vulgarity, selfishness, and aggression

will, it seems, as long as it is able to exert itself, is perfectly happy to take on contradictory roles. One can imagine the laughter in the audience—one hopes primarily among recent jurymen—as the impulse that was obsessive in enforcing the law turns out to be just as well satisfied in breaking it.

In a tragic play, the revelation that both of two contradictory roles stem from the same source might well lead to a deeper sense of character. Aristophanes, in contrast, by setting Philocleon's shifts within a parody of tragic implacability, points to comedy's lack of concern with the inner self. Philocleon begins the *agon* by calling for a sword, so that, like Ajax, he can fall upon it if he loses the contest (522–523). Like Aeschylus' Furies, his temperament, described as harsh and implacable (105, 277–280, 655, 729–730, 877–884), responds to persuasion with a sense of bewilderment and loss of identity (696–697, 713–714, and see 793–794). Finally, in defeat, after a long Aeschylean silence (741), with all that matters in life lost to him, and with the tragic cry "*io, moi, moi*" (750, as *Ajax* 333, 336, 385), he bids his spirit fly—"Speed thou my soul …" (*psyche*, 756)—and immolates himself.[80] The sword unfortunately misses, causing Philocleon to start looking for the soul he failed to hit (756). Apparently he does not find it, since, after a second tragic attempt on his life, he decides just to adopt his son's idea and do his judging at home (764–776).

Just as Aristophanes set Philocleon's first switch, from public to private juror, against a background of tragic parody, he sets his second, far more sudden switch from juror to symposiast (1009) against a second tragic response. Here, in addition, Philocleon's reference to his *tropos*, "way," rather than to his *psyche* or *physis*, "nature," suggests that, as a comic character, his changes are a matter of course:[81]

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that Lovecleon displayed as a juror have not been lost but only let loose on society at large"; Ruffell in Revermann, 165–167 for psychological dimensions in anti-realist characters.

80 Rau, 1967, 150–152 for *Wasps* 316 ff.; 152–155 for the tragic silences. Philocleon's paratragedy sets off his son's nonparodic speech, while, for purely occasional paratragedy, see the Boy's earlier lament s (312–313).

81 In tragedy Gibert, 1995, 127–129 sees *tropos* as "state of mind"; Thumiger, 2007, 73 *psyche* as "close to a concept of one's unitary and individual nature, not directly evident from one's utterances and behaviour, but rooted in a deeper level of human innerness." Here the chorus switches from *tropoi* (1451) to *physis* (1456–1457), to *tropoi* (1460), implying a comic identity between them; for *tropos*, for example: *Wasps* 748, 1002, 1468; *Knights* 1133, 1280; for *physis* in comedy as changeable: *Knights* 518, *Clouds* 515, *Birds* 117, 371 etc., *WT* 167 in context; in tragedy Berns, 1973; Goldhill in Easterling, 142–144; Blundell, 1988.

However can I myself bear this on my conscience,
having let a defendant escape? Whatever will I suffer?
But, O most-honored (or most-penalizing, *polutimetoi*) gods, forgive me:
unwilling were those things I did, and not my way (*tropou*).
1001–1002

As emphasized by his tragic parody, the ease with which he adopts his new roles, and the remarkable insouciance with which he pursues his own pleasure, Philocleon is in many ways the model of a comic hero. As such, the love of power that turns out to underlie his various roles points not to anything particular to himself, but rather to a comic view of justice, as the force that ordered the cosmos in the *Oresteia* proves, in comedy, to be merely one possible *tropos* of many.

3.2 *Philocleon's Metatheatrical Freedom*

In a vivid contrast to Ajax's refusal to accept the judgment of the arms or Medea's to accept Jason's dismissal, Philocleon shifts roles completely and with no reference to his past. As in his comic inability to locate his *psyche*, he has no inner consistency to defend against an encroaching world. As a result his encounters with necessity, in his loss in the *agon* and in the acquittal of Labes, last just as long, and no longer, than the scene in which he encounters them. He is consequently untouchable. Like Medea, if she did not care about being laughed at, or like Odysseus, if he was content to remain as "Noman," Philocleon can achieve a self-sufficiency impossible for the tragic hero precisely because he has no investment in any particular self.

But while Philocleon is a model of complete comic freedom, he also points to an ambivalence in that model, since the limitations that he refuses to accept turn out to be the ones that define him. Philocleon, it seems, will not be confined even by the play Aristophanes has written for him. In the prologue, Xanthias explains that the *Wasps*, "a little story, but with a point" (64), is about an obsession with juries, and that Philocleon is there to illustrate it. Philocleon, however, does not stick to this role. By the end of the play he has defied every possible restriction, including, in changing places with his son, that of time.[82]

82 Being, as he says, "an only father," guarded by his son, 1349–1359. For his new youth see also l. 1333, and the chorus's contrasting laments on old age (230ff., 441); E. Segal, 2001 for rejuvenation as basic to comedy; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 95 on *Wasps*; Sommerstein, 1977, 268 for a rejuvenated chorus dropping their sticks. Handley in Sommerstein et al., 417–430 sets the transformation within a polarity of old and young and see Halliwell, 1991b for the ambivalence: "those troubled by such behavior find in it a threat to the stability of the social order, while its defenders claim it to be no more than the typical 'play' of young men" (285).

And finally, by deciding to end Aristophanes' play not with a comic but with a tragic chorus, he defies even the rules of his genre.

From our first introduction to Philocleon it is clear that, like Odysseus, he is a shape-shifter who resists confinement:

> From then we no longer let him go out,
> but he kept escaping, first through the gutters
> then through the chinks. So, anywhere there was a gap,
> we stuffed it with rags and sealed it tight.
> But he hammered pegs in the wall and, like a pet crow
> hopping up, he was gone.
> So we covered over the whole courtyard with netting,
> and posted all around we're standing guard.
>
> 125–132

Philocleon is like smoke (142–151), a mouse (139–140, 205), a sparrow (207), a ferret to nibble his way out of the nets (362–372), and (almost) a runnet cheese (*opia*, 353, punning on *ope* "chink," 350) to dribble out of the cracks.[83] In short, he is protean, a theme whose importance is reinforced by the place that this scene occupies in the play as a whole. Aristophanes' other plays of this period begin, like the *Acharnians*, with an impossible plan that is defended in the *agon* and explored in the play's second half. In the *Wasps*, Philocleon's attempt at escape has taken over the place of the usual "big idea." Hence the chorus, whose entrance usually highlights the play's central device (as the Acharnians challenge Dikaiopolis' private peace and the knights champion the sausage seller), come on stage to challenge precisely Philocleon's confinement.

But if in the first half of the *Wasps* Philocleon is trying to get free of his son, by the second half he seems to be trying to get free of the play altogether. The problem appears first in his name. After sixty-five lines of describing the conflict of father and son, Xanthias finally gives us their names, "Cleon-lover" and "Cleon-hater" (133–134).[84] Since Aristophanes, as he reminds us (30–51, 62–63, 1284–1291), makes a point of his campaign against Cleon, the names should show us where our sympathies should lie.[85] And yet there is no escaping the fact

83 See Silk, 2000, 282–290 for transformation as a general theme in Aristophanes.

84 See Olson, 1992 for delay emphasizing names in comedy. The names are repeated (137, 163, 372, 1466) interspersed with references to Cleon (197, 242, 409, 596), culminating in the trial of "Cuon" (895, 902), then largely dropped after the *parabasis*. Philocleon's mention of Philocles (462) also recalls his own name.

85 As Dover, 1972, 129; *Wasps* 62 and *Peace* 45–48 on Aristophanes' usual attacks on Cleon.

that it is the "Cleon-lover," despite both his name and his political inclinations, who is the hero of the play, while the "Cleon-hater" is only his straight man.[86] By the second half of the play the names themselves are out of whack, with "Cleon-lover" calling Cleon a thief and scoundrel while "Cleon-hater" impersonates Cleon (1224–1235).[87] The usual explanation is that Aristophanes named his hero in accordance with the first part of the play, and then didn't worry about it later on.[88] The discrepancy, however, is so jarring that it forces itself into the plot. And even more pointedly, Aristophanes brings out the anomaly rather than concealing it. Had he wanted to cover up the discrepancy, there was no need to introduce Cleon into the practice symposium.

In the first half of the *Wasps*, Aristophanes' association of himself, a notorious "Cleon-hater," with Bdelycleon is so strong that Philocleon's attempts to escape the authority of his son carry overtones of an attempt to escape the authority of his author as well. The link appears in the repetition of the characters' names (133–134, 137, 163, 372); in Bdelycleon's arguments, which sound very much like those of Aristophanes' earlier plays; in the mock trial in which "Cleon-hater" engineers "Cuon's" defeat; in Bdelycleon's "trugody," one of Aristophanes' favorite coinages (650); and in the use of the playwright's particular verb, "*didasko*," to teach or direct, to describe Bdelycleon's lecture (653). Even a minor touch, like the writing tablet that Bdelycleon calls for (529–530), associates him with the poet.[89] In the plays produced between 425 and 421, when Aristophanes was still under thirty, he regularly portrays himself as the young, dutiful, and unappreciated helper of the people, a portrayal very similar to the chorus's description of Bdelycleon (729–735).[90] In fact, Bdelycleon's atti-

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As his name implies, Bdelycleon targets demagogues rather than jurors, also usual in Aristophanes' *parabases*.

86 Zimmerman in Fontaine and Scafuro, 145; Konstan, 1985, 33–35; MacDowell, 1971, 8–9 on Bdelycleon as "comparatively colourless" and "a foil to Philocleon."

87 Foreshadowed in the chorus's coinage for Bdelycleon, "Demologocleon" (342) or "Demagogocleon" as Sommerstein, *Wasps*, translates.

88 MacDowell, 1995, 172–173 and see the Introduction for thematic vs. convenient inconsistencies. Here, for example, we are not asked to wonder (for long) why "Cleon-lover" would name his son "Cleon-hater."

89 For Aristophanes' voice merging with Bdelycleon's, Olson 1996, 143–145; Paduano, 1974, 71; Bakola, 2010, 37. See Olson, 1996, 144–145 for the writing tablet and parallels in the *parabasis*; Reckford, 1987, 273–274 for Aristophanes' play with similarities between himself and Bdelycleon. In contrast, A.M. Bowie, 1993, 97–98 sees Bdelycleon as "entirely unsympathetic" and Slater 2002, 98 comments: "the enemy of my enemy may be my friend, but that does not make him *me*."

90 For Aristophanes fighting on behalf of his elders, *Knights*, 507–550, *Clouds* 528–562; as

tude toward his father resembles nothing as closely as Aristophanes' attitude in the *Knights*, produced two years earlier, to Demos ("Mr. People")—another aged, obstinate, deluded, but (in his own way) lovable curmudgeon.

But in the *Wasps* things tend not to work out as planned. Aristophanes' identification of himself with Bdelycleon reaches its climax in the *parabasis*, where, Philocleon having been weaned from his love of Cleon, Aristophanes' own struggle with Cleon is described. Given the model of *Knights* or *Peace* (produced in the following year), we might expect the episodes that follow to explore Bdelycleon / Aristophanes' fantastic success and Philocleon's, as Demos's, extravagant gratitude. Instead the play suddenly changes direction.[91] Even more significantly, the cause that Bdelycleon is now identified with, the attempt of the luxurious "younger generation" to eliminate the old ways, is one Aristophanes had already condemned in *Banqueters*, *Clouds*, and the *parabasis* of *Acharnians*. With Bdelycleon now on the wrong side, it seems that his father, who derides the new sophistication, will restore the play's equilibrium and represent the old ways that Aristophanes traditionally championed.[92]

But this role lasts no longer than the earlier ones. When Philocleon leaves the symposium it is not, like Strepsiades, in disgust. On the contrary, he has now made another 180-degree turn, and adopted the new ways, particularly the witty stories of the symposia, with a vengeance. In fact, he now sees himself as too young to worry about old fogy things like self-control or moderation (1335–1336, 1354–1355, 1362, and see 1333). If it were not for his Euripides crack at 1414 we might wonder if he was an Aristophanic hero at all.

Philocleon's shape-shifting has now moved through most of Aristophanes' pet themes (handily listed for us at 58–63). From here he moves on to comedy itself. Philocleon emerges from the symposium as the essence of the comic hero, beating his antagonists, escaping the consequences of his actions, dangling his phallus, threatening with his torch, and projecting his shape-shifting

unappreciated, *Wasps* 1015–1050; for youth vs. age see the *Acharnians' parabasis*, 676–691, 703–718; Silk, 1987, 90 ff.

91 Underlined by "Aristophanes" saying he will not reconcile with Cleon (1284–1291) just after "Cleon-hater" has taken on Cleon's role (1224–1225). Dermont in Thiercy and Menu, 477 suggests that Aristophanes hinted at a deal by leaking Philocleon's name. As Sommerstein, *Wasps*, xxx, if this is not true, it ought to be.

92 For the education theme in *Wasps*, Strauss, 1966, 132–135; for *Banqueters*, MacDowell, 1995, 27–29; Reckford, 1977, 300. See Henderson, 1991a, 74 for the serious teacher / buffoonish student routine; Sutton, 1993, 15–27 as connected to (Oedipal) father / son relations.

abilities onto a sexy young woman (1370–1378).[93] In fact, as the personification of unpunished verbal abuse, he hearkens back even further, to the licensed abuse of the *komos* and the very origins of comedy. But even this role, which should be precisely suited to him, does not last. When we see him again, as he escapes from his house for the final scene, his fancy has turned to the tragic.

Philocleon's tendency to tragedy has shown up before, particularly, as we have seen, in his "defeat" scenes. As the play comes to an end, however, his use of tragedy moves from the occasional to the thematic. He is now thoroughly drunk and, having spent the night performing the dances of Thespis (1476–1479), thoroughly imbued with the great tragic poets of old. As Philocleon tragically demands release from the house in which he is once more imprisoned ("Who sitteth at the outer doors"; "Let thou these bars be loosed" 1482, 1484, and see 1442–1445), Aristophanes gives us a doublet of the opening scene, bringing the two halves of the play together and encouraging us to compare the new Philocleon with the old. As he dances in in Phrynichus' archaic tragic style (1490), challenging the tragic upstarts to a contest (1485–1515), he has come a long way from Odysseus under a donkey.[94]

As a comic hero Philocleon is completely free. He is not defined by any inner necessity, such as that which binds in either Medea or Ajax. Nor is he defined by any of the various social roles—obsessed juror, giver of law to his household, defender of the old values, symposiast, lawless spirit—that he takes on and discards. In fact, as his final escape into tragedy seems to indicate, he is defined by nothing at all, not even by the genre that created him. By taking Philocleon's resistance to constraint into the realm of metatheater, Aristophanes makes a point similar to that which we saw in the *Acharnians*. There Dikaiopolis' desire to be free of the *polis* also freed him from the connection he had to the audience. Here Philocleon's insistence on escape points out that the limitations we resist are also the ones that make us who we are.

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93 In filling the comic agenda of *Clouds* 537–544 he also, ironically, becomes the comic hero Aristophanes claimed to repudiate. For Philocleon as paradigmatic comic hero see E. Segal, 2001, 77–84; Silk, 2000, 269–275; and as pure physical wish-fulfillment, MacCarey, 1979. Philocleon's magic stories, which ward off prosecution, may even parody Aristophanes' challenges to Cleon.

94 See Rau, 1967, 155–157; Borthwick, 1968; Sommerstein, *Wasps*, 244–245 for the tragic register. The door, as Sommerstein mentions, and as Brown, 361 in Revermann and Wilson, is presumably open. Philocleon has been connected earlier to tragedy (580, 462) and to Phrynichus (e.g. 220, 269; Sommerstein, 1977, 263) who may be chosen because the name belonged both to an ancient tragic poet and to a contemporary comic one, as 1302; MacDowell, *Wasps*, 302, 324–325.

As an exploration of the ambivalence inherent in the idea of freedom, Philocleon's final escape is a significant one. But in thinking he can escape from comedy, of course, he is mistaken. This is apparent in the final "escape" of the play:[95]

> But, if you like, while dancing lead us out,
> and quickly, for this no one has ever done
> to release, dancing, a chorus of trugodians.
>
> 1535–1537

Although the most direct humor of the final scene, Philocleon's version of an archaic tragic dance, is sadly lost to us, the effect appears in Philocleon's evident belief that the more extravagant the dance, the more "tragic" it is. This is echoed in the last word of the play, "trugody," which, as we have seen, implies a combination of tragedy and comedy.[96] At the end of the *Wasps* the blend is simple: for Philocleon, tragic exuberance, for Aristophanes, comic originality. To the audience, one imagines, it must have been hilarious.[97]

Philocleon's transformation is, at one and the same time, an escape from comedy and a confirmation that he is essentially comic. How this is possible becomes clear when we compare comedy to its accompanying genres. A tragic hero, even in satyr drama, speaks and acts like a tragic hero. A satyr speaks, dances, and sings like a satyr. Comedy, however, is protean.[98] It is a given of his particular genre that a comic hero is free to be anything, comic, satyric, or

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95 Although the chorus is going simply "out" from the orchestra, the emphasis on doors at 1482 ff. recalls *thuraze*'s original (and here contradictory) sense of "out of doors" and, as "*apellaxen*," "to release, free," the theme of escape. See Vaio, 1971 on the exuberance and ambiguity of the scene.

96 See Chapter Three, section three and Wright in Bakola et al. for *Wasps* in particular. Philocleon is compared to *trux* or new wine at 1309, as MacDowell, *Wasps*, 304 against Sommerstein's *Phrugi* (Kock's conjecture).

97 Reckford, 1977, 312: "if you can't make the crab walk straight, you can make him dance." For the tragic meter, Sommerstein, 1977, 262–264; for the dance, Borthwick, 1968, 44–51; MacCary, 1979, 143: "What is so difficult about the end of the *Wasps* is that it presents us with music and dance which pretend to be tragic, in a comic context, and from the descriptions of the dance movements and the general associations of the rhythm of the music, it seems more comic than tragic." See Slater, 2002, 108–109 for the dance fusing comedy and tragedy; Silk, 2000, 432–435 as embodying Aristophanes' self-definition and "comic seriousness" (435); Whitman, 1964, 154–165 as without heroic overtones or connection to the play's meaning.

98 As Silk (1988, 2000) has pointed out, comedy, in stark contrast to tragedy, defies definition, as seen in the enormously varied attempts to define it.

tragic—the last being Aristophanes' favorite kind. Like Odysseus, who is also "*polytropos*" or "of many ways," Philocleon can escape any constraint simply by adopting another role. Unlike Odysseus, however, Philocleon is able to shift roles so conveniently only because, in the end, he is every bit as contingent as the world he inhabits.

4 Aristophanes and the Three Stooges: Pitying Your Betters, Envying Inferior Men

> I would never belong to a club that had me for a member.
>
> GROUCHO MARX

Tragic heroes are paradoxical figures. Although they are, in Aristotle's terms, above the audience (1448a18), although they belong to an archaic and aristocratic world very different from Athens, although, as we have seen with Ajax and Medea, they are often antithetical to the *polis*, and although they are often (and radically so in the case of Medea) very much "other" than the Athenian spectators, the audience is meant to feel for them.[99] There is an opposite paradox in the case of comedy. Here, where the heroes are typical Athenians, and where, for the most part, they achieve everything they wish, there is a distance between the hero and the audience.[100] The distance is also an inherent one, since the comic hero, who can laugh with impunity at others, does so at the price, as unacceptable to an ordinary Athenian as to Ajax or Medea, of being the butt of laughter himself.[101]

99 For tragic figures as "better" see the condemnation of Euripides' "democratic" tragedy (*Frogs* 952–953) and the account of his rewriting *Hippolytus* to be more acceptably "tragic" (Hypothesis of Aristophanes of Byzantium; Michelini, 1987, 287–290). See Hesk in McDonald and Walton, 72–76; Meier, 1993, 167–187; Goldhill, 1986, 144ff. for the tension between hero and *polis*, as C. Segal, 1981, 11: "In five of the seven [Sophoclean] plays [all but *Ajax* and *Electra*] the hero is explicitly called *apolis* or *apoptolis*, 'citiless' or 'cut off from city'"; Bain, 1977, 209–212 points to the anachronistic setting; Mikalson, 1991, 68 sees a tie to the gods unlike that of ordinary people.

100 I use "hero" deliberately, as Lysistrata and Praxagora are, as below, special cases.

101 On Medea and Ajax see above; *Philoctetes* 258, 1023, 1125; Pittacus DK 10.3.e.2; Halliwell,

The ambivalence of our response to the comic hero lies at the heart of the opposition between comic and tragic characters. Greek tragedy, as has often been pointed out, seeks to create an intense emotional response, although, as Euripides' *Medea* shows, that response was by no means either simple or uniform.[102] For Plato this is why tragedy is dangerous, because it encourages us, "giving ourselves over and suffering alongside" (*Rep*. 605d2), to indulge in emotions that we would otherwise be ashamed of. For Aristotle as well tragedy creates an emotional link of pity and fear: "the first is for one who fares badly without deserving it, the second for one like ourselves, that is, pity for the undeserving, fear for the one who is like us (*homoion*)" (1453a5).[103] Finally, Gorgias saw the emotional identification that tragedy calls forth as so strong that he described it as a kind of deception (*apate*), commenting that, paradoxically, here one who is deceived is wiser than one who is not (DK 82.B23 = Plutarch. *Moralia* 348c).[104] Like Medea and Ajax, the heroes and heroines of tragedy are complex, and as such elicit a complex response from the audience.[105] It is a complexity, however, that proved absorbing.

1991b; Blundell, 1989, 62 (with further references); Dillon, 1991, 349 calculating that 40% of references to laughter in tragedy concern a fear of derision. The Cynics' willingness to both use laughter and be laughed at was not the least unusual of their traits.

102 For the complexity see McDermott, 1989, 78–79; Garvie, 2007, 184–188; Lawrence, 1997, 49. For the emotional focus: Heath in Carter, 170: "ancient evidence leaves no doubt that one crucial component of the pleasure of tragedy was an emotional experience of great intensity"; Mastronarde, 2010, 93: "tragedy depends for its effect on the spectators' emotional engagement with the protagonists"; Lada, 1993 and in Silk, 397–413; Stanford, 1983; Reckford in Burian, 112–114; Wilson, 2000a, 112–114 for contemporary evidence; Rosenmeyer, 1955 on *apate* as essential to Aeschylean theater; Taplin in E. Segal, 1983, 1–12 and 1978, 169: "It seems to me, then, that Gorgias is right that tragedy is essentially the *emotional experience of its audience*" [italics original]. See Goldhill, 2000, 40–41 against Heath, 1987c and in Griffin, for the focus on emotion not precluding an intellectual response as well.

103 Rabinowitz, 2008, 17: "For both Aristotle and Plato, tragedy is an aesthetic object that has as its goal the arousal of emotion"; on Aristotle's view of tragedy as extending our emotional range, Lear, 1992; as insufficiently aware of *pathos*, Golden, 1976. Polybios 2, 56, 11 (as Naddaff, 2002, 107–120) also sees tragedy as overwhelming the feelings and "leading the *psyche*."

104 It is hard to see the point of this if Athenians had not experienced "losing themselves," as in the common depiction of an actor, once his mask is donned, actually *becoming* the character (as Chapter Two, section one; Green in McDonald and Walton, 172–173). In contrast, see Ruffell in Revermann and Wilson, 39. Although, with Ruffell, some cognitive and emotional response is needed for both comedy and tragedy, they may well be weighted differently.

105 See Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 1–20 and 220–221; Roselli, 2011, and the Conclusion.

Comedy, unlike tragedy, tends not to absorb the audience emotionally, but to distance it, as in its continual reminders that the play we are watching is fictional.[106] The tendency, however, only complicates the situation. One reason may be that laughter, and particularly laughter in the Greek context, is multivalent. In the fifth century, as scholars have pointed out, laughter was associated with friendship and seen as social and therapeutic, but it was also linked to hostility, and seen as scornful and destructive.[107] Old Comedy uses both. It gives us both purely sympathetic characters, like the bridesmaid in the *Acharnians*, and characters that our laughter simply rejects, like Aristophanes' recurrent informers. Even more interestingly, however, comedy can, by appealing to different sides of an audience, encourage us to see the same character, the comic hero, with both sympathy and disdain. As we are self-indulgent individuals, the comic hero is a source of vicarious pleasure, but as we are also responsible social beings, we look down on his buffoonery and breach of social norms. In other words, in comedy we neither simply laugh with, nor laugh at the comic hero; rather we do both simultaneously.

We have already seen this double response, in which we are invited to identify with the comic hero and also distanced from him, in Aristophanes' treatment of Dikaiopolis. The same effect is apparent in *Wasps*. As Kenneth Dover notes with bemusement, Philocleon, although a rogue and a reprobate, selfish, egotistic, and utterly unconcerned with either justice or the well-being of others, is extremely attractive.[108] It might also be added that the qualities that

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106 See Taplin, 1986, 164–165; Silk, 1988, 30 n. 9 for a history of the contrast; Revermann, 2006a, 34: "While tragedy, Greek and non-Greek, aims at an audience silenced and numbed by the horror as it unfolds on stage, comedy needs an openly interactive audience ready to intervene spontaneously through laughter." More generally, Bergson sees comedy as essentially intellectual and tragedy as emotional (as 9–13); Brecht contrasts his "epic" drama to "Aristotelian" tragedy (Brecht, 1964, 23, 71 and see 46–47) which Boal, 1979 describes as emotionally manipulative and which Foley, 1988, 44–45 compares to Aristophanes. Cook, 1949, 29, 50–51 cites the French proverbs "Qui sent, pleurt; qui pense, rit" and "Le rire dans la rue; les pleurs à la maison" and see N. Grene, 1980, 214: "the tragic involves a shared spiritual or emotional experience, the comic a shared social event. Comedy addresses us as a community of social beings, tragedy as a community of individual souls." Although Goldhill links the distancing effect of "putting the audience on stage" to tragedy (Goldhill and Hall, 46) it is far more applicable to comedy.

107 See in particular Halliwell, 1991b, 2008, particularly 10–11, 19–38; Dillon, 1991, especially 351–352; Sommerstein, 2009, 104–115. For an example of the complexity of laughter in tragedy, Dillon, 351 points to Pentheus' scornful laughter, as played against Dionysus' smiling mask.

108 Dover, 1972, 125–126: "Recent commentators have remarked on the sympathy and affection

make him attractive are exactly the ones that would be condemned anywhere except on the comic stage. But while Philocleon is seductive, he is also ridiculous, as seen in the negative reaction of both the hypothetical (1226–1248) and the actual symposiasts (1299–1325), the characters in the play's episodes, and finally even Xanthias, whose first description of Philocleon's rowdiness contained a grudging admiration (1299–1325), but who sums up his behavior as simply insane (1486, 1496). It is a judgment foreshadowed by the chorus, once Philocleon's closest associates, but now effusive in their praise of Bdelycleon's attempts to tame the old man (1450–1473).[109]

Philocleon thus pulls the audience in two opposite directions: like the other characters in the play we see that his lawlessness is impossible and absurd, and yet we envy his freedom. The response may be irrational, but it is not uncommon. A whole category of comic heroes, ranging from Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* or Face in *The Alchemist* to the Marx Brothers, the Three Stooges, Mr. Bean, or Borat, create a similarly mixed response, in which we both enjoy their irresponsibility and look down upon them as buffoons.[110]

It is this kind of hero, and this kind of response, that largely characterizes Aristophanic comedy. In fact, of all of Aristophanes' extant plays, the only cases in which Aristophanes does not create mixed feelings, either about the hero or about his or her "big idea," are Trugaios in the *Peace*, who will be considered in Chapter Six, and Lysistrata.[111] In the case of Lysistrata, the reason is clearly

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which [Philocleon] evokes in the spectator and in the reader. I admit that he evokes mine; and yet I remain astonished at the hidden strength of the antinomian sentiment which that sympathy and affection imply." MacDowell, *Wasps*, 7–8 describes Philocleon as "an old scallywag" and (1995, 178–179) attempts to resolve the paradox: "he is not really responsible for the harm he does in the courts"; "When his eyes are opened, the truth comes to him as a surprise and a shock"; "it is because he invokes our sympathy as well as our laughter that he is a great comic character."

109 Sommerstein, *Wasps*, xvii–viii and 244, sees the lines as ironic. By comic standards, however, "gentle" (1467) is not a preposterous description of Bdelocleon's behavior; contrast Pheidippides in *Clouds*.

110 See MacDowell in Redmond, 1988 for the superiority a character like Philocleon induces in the audience; Reckford, 1987, 65–67 compares Dikaiopolis to Charlie Chaplin: we laugh because they are both lower and greater than us.

111 In the *Knights* (as Chapter Five) and, in a different form, the *Clouds*, our ambivalence towards the hero is largely the point of the play. For *Birds* see Chapter Six, and for *Frogs* Chapter Seven. On Aristophanes' later plays, Ruffell in Kozak 67: "both utopian and anti-utopian readings of the final plays are internally inconsistent, and rest on a number of questionable assumptions; … an alternative reading of a complex dialogue between utopianism and anti-utopianism is not a convenient fudge which avoids the traditional

that Aristophanes is experimenting with a comic heroine.[112] From what we can judge, the inclusion of women in comedy, at least before 410, was rare, and the use of a heroine nearly unheard of. The situation explains much, both about Lysistrata's unusual nobility and steadfastness and about the unmixed response that Aristophanes creates toward her.[113] As a political agent, and as a free respectable woman appearing on the public stage, Lysistrata, essentially, was already ambivalent enough.

As we have seen, one reason that comedy can champion human freedom is that the constraints that its hero faces are man-made. The comic hero escapes from a necessity imposed not by fate or the gods, but by society, which is to say (and here is the ambivalence) a necessity imposed by the spectators themselves.[114] Appealing to its audience as a social body, Aristophanic comedy shows up the hero's violation of social norms as the act of a buffoon. But Aristophanes also, at the same time, appeals to his audience as individuals, and in so doing invites them to delight vicariously in the lawlessness and freedom of its heroes.[115] There is a strong human inconsistency in the fact

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question, but is actually far more consonant with the way that both comedy and ideology function." On *Assemblywomen* see, e.g. Saxenhouse, 1992, 19; Ober, 1998, 152; Henderson, 1991a, 100–101; Saïd in Bonnamour and Delavault. For *Wealth*, Revermann, 2006a, 261–295; Konstan and Dillon, 1981 and Konstan, 1995, 75–90; Flashar, 1975; Bowie, 1993, 291; Cartledge, 1990, 68–90; Olson 1990b and 234 n. 38 for a further bibliography. As Olson, 1990b, 241: "At one and the same time, the play offers them [landless poor] an unfettered, irrational escape from an admittedly miserable reality and an interpretation of that reality as livable and even dignifying." For arguments against ambivalence see Sommerstein, 1984, 314–333 (where he is clearly right, against Foley and Saïd, that physical indulgence is not a reason to condemn a comic hero) and 2001, 13–20 for similarities between *Wealth* and *Assemblywomen*. Barber, 1959, 228 describes the phenomenon in Shakespeare, who "represents or evokes ideal life, and then makes fun of it because it does not square with life as it ordinarily is." For a "non-ironic" view and sources see McGlew, 2002, 174–177.

112 In contrast, an ambivalent "big idea" replaces the heroine in the second half of *Assemblywomen*.

113 For women onstage, Henderson, 1980, 169–172 and in Harvey and Wilkins, 2000; Storey, 2003, 316–317 somewhat qualifies this view. See Foley, 1982, 9 for Lysistrata and Lampito as "mature, prominent citizens with reputations of their own" in contrast to the usual comic hero; Whitman, 1964, 200–216 for Lysistrata having "a sort of high seriousness" (211); Taaffe, 1993, 20–21 for the ambiguity of a woman in public life.

114 In *Clouds* the constraint is debt, in *Wealth*, poverty, in *Knights* and *Wasps*, demagoguery, in *Peace* and *Lysistrata*, war, in *Assemblywomen*, private property, and in *Birds* the *polis* itself. See Sutton, 1993, 8 for Aristophanes' fantasies of empowerment as anti-social.

115 Budelmann, 2000, 13–15; Ruffel, 2011 261–313 for the audience as collective; Sutton, 1993, 11–13, 1994, 58–60 for the comic hero as antinomian; as Silk, 2000, 428 on Philocleon:

that we can relish the behavior of characters that we would disdain to be. But, as in the Groucho Marx joke quoted at the beginning of the section, the standards we set for ourselves do not always jibe with the people we are. Like Groucho, Aristophanes may be suggesting that the issue is not always that the world around us is contradictory; it is sometimes that we are contradictory ourselves.

"by his outrageous behavior [he] actually excludes himself from society as a whole." For views that see both sides, Rothfield, 1999, 35–36 on a double appeal of *joie de vivre* and social criticism; Wiles in Revermann and Wilson, 385 on laughter creating a sense of both superiority and community; Sommerstein, 2009, 114: "the audience can have both, laughing at the characters as spectators, laughing with them as participants in the Dionysiac experience."

CHAPTER 5

Oedipus Tyrannos and the *Knights*: Oracles, Divine and Human

> Glendower: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
> Hotspur: Why, so can I, or so can any man,
> But will they come when you do call for them?
>
> SHAKESPEARE, *1 Henry 4* (3.1.51–53)

∵

The divine voice, as expressed in dreams, omens, prophecy, and, above all, oracles, is a regular feature of both comedy and tragedy.[1] The difference is that in tragedy the divine voice is always divine, while in comedy, as in Hotspur's view above, it is human, and both manipulated and manipulative. When Creon or Oedipus accuses Teiresias of being a bribe-taker and a charlatan, it is a given of the tragic stage that they are wrong. When Peisetairos or Trugaios condemn an oracle-monger on the same grounds (*Peace* 1043 ff., *Birds* 959 ff.), it is a given of the comic stage that they are right.[2]

As we will see, the specific aspect of the oracle that Aristophanes adopts in the *Knights*, as elsewhere, is its tendency to be "abstruse, somehow, and subtly riddling" (*poikilos pos kai sophos einigmenos*, *Knights* 196, as *Peace* 1063 ff., *Birds* 967 ff., etc.). The focus points to a tendency we will examine at the end of the chapter, that what comedy often inverts is tragedy, rather than ordinary experience. As a number of studies have shown, despite the fact

1 To the extent that, as Lefkowitz, 1981, 72, the theme came to pervade even the poets' biographies. See also Goward, 1999, 24–26 on the infallibility of the divine voice as extending the temporal range of tragedy.

2 Mikalson, 1991, 100: "The seers of tragedy are always right; what they prophesy and what they claim to know always proves true." Parker in Griffin, 14 and 1983, 15: "while in high literature the seer is always right, in comedy he is always wrong"; the distrust of *Agam.* 1130 ff., or of Jocasta in *Oedipus Tyrannos*, is answered by the play, as Gantz, 1981 on Thetis' charge in Aeschylus (*Republic* 383b). For Euripides stretching the point, as *Helen* 744–760, *Iphigenia at Aulis* 520–521, 957 ff. see Hall, 2013, 149 on *Children of Heracles*; Dale, *Helen*, 117–118.

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that Herodotus also adopts the "riddling" form of the oracle, the oracles that Athenians would be most familiar with were quite direct, concerning foreign policy, recommending that a colony be sent out or not, advising for or against the prosecution of a war, etc.[3] As Bowden argues, when Athenians consulted an oracle, "they looked for, and received, unambiguous answers to the questions they asked, and … followed that advice."[4] Even in *Knights*, Demos understands perfectly well the oracle that was in fact given to Athens, describing her as an eagle among the clouds (1011–1013). The audience too obviously knew what that oracle meant, whatever they thought about its truth.

It is in tragedy rather than in ordinary life that prophecies and oracles are assumed to be ambiguous, as in the interchange in the *Agamemnon*:[5]

> Cassandra: You must indeed have missed my prophecies.
> Chorus: Yes, I don't see who accomplishes this scheme.
> Cassandra: And yet I know Greek speech only too well.
> Chorus: And so does Delphi, but it still is hard to understand.
> *Agam.* 1252–1255

In fact, Cassandra, whose prophecies can be understood only after they have been fulfilled, embodies the "riddling" oracle and its sense that the divine voice is unintelligible to those involved in the action.[6] The frequency of her appearance in tragedy points to tragedy's adoption of this kind of oracle and its deeper significance, that in some ways human and divine understanding are incompatible.[7]

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3 Mikalson, 1991, 88–91; Bowden, 2005, 109–133; Fontenrose, 1978, 11–57.

4 Bowden, 2005, 6 and see 49–51; Mikalson, 1991, 90: "All the demonstrably historical oracles from Delphi and Dodona in the classical period were unambiguous statements about what one should or should not do in a given situation"; Fontenrose, 1978, 233–239 argues that the reputation for ambiguity is modern.

5 Bushnell, 1998, 14 on the contrast; Mikalson, 1991, 90 also pointing out that, despite the assumption, riddling oracles are in the minority even in tragedy; Bowden, 2005, 64 on tragedy's influence on popular views.

6 Hence the chorus of the *Agamemnon* immediately understand Cassandra's references to Thyestes' children (1184ff.), an event in the past, but not the far clearer prediction that Clytemnestra will murder Agamemnon (1100ff.).

7 Whitman, 1951, 107–108 on the *Women of Trachis*: "The wealth of oracular material only emphasizes the impossibility of knowing the future"; C. Segal, 2001, 54 on the separation of human and divine knowledge in *Oedipus Tyrannos* and 1981, 57: "Cassandra's language sums up the paradox of the tragic situation: the attempt to communicate that which is incommunicable"; Zeitlin, 1996, 357 on tragedy overall: "This pervasive irony may manifest

A second feature of the "divine voice" that Aristophanes adopts and inverts in the *Knights* is its connection to necessity. In tragedy, where the voice is actually divine, and so correct, the connection is natural. In Aeschylus necessity underlies Atossa's dream in the *Persians*, the curse of the *Seven against Thebes*, the figure of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*, and the oracle of Apollo in the *Libation Bearers*. The pattern emerges even more powerfully in Sophocles, who was also the dominant tragic poet from Aristophanes' youth to Sophocles' death in 405.[8] Of his seven extant plays, five—that is, all except the *Antigone* and *Electra*—use an oracle or prophecy to underline the necessity of the action, a role that the *Antigone* gives directly to Teiresias.[9] Dreams, oracles, and prophecy can also convey necessity in Euripides' plays. In *Hecuba*, Polydorus' voice from the dead outlines the necessity that Hecuba will face in the course of the play; in *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, Iphigenia's dream forecasts the action, while in the *Trojan Women*, Cassandra both reminds the audience of the events that will bind in the Greeks and ties this, the third play, back to the *Alexander* and the prophecies about Paris that opened the trilogy.[10] Even when Apollo's oracle is treated somewhat cynically, as in *Iphigenia among the Taurians* or the *Ion*, it still necessitates the action of the plays.[11]

As we will see in the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, it is the inadequacy of human understanding, the theme brought out in particular in the "riddling" form of the oracle, that links the tragic oracle to necessity. How pervasive this theme was appears most clearly in Herodotus, who was, according to most scholars, heavily influenced by Athenian tragedy.[12] As in tragedy, Herodotus' oracles often

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itself in many ways, and it owes its effectiveness to a strong conviction about the ambiguous, even opaque nature of verbal communication that is reflected in the belief in oracles." The same motif appears in Cambyses' death at "Ecbatana" (Herod. 3.64), Henry IV's death in "Jerusalem" (*2 Henry IV*, 4.5.234–240) or Macbeth's defeat by one "not of woman born" (5.5.11–16). See Fontenrose, 1978, 60–61 for the motif in a Delphic oracle.

8 Receiving at least twenty first prizes to Euripides' three or four. The *Suda*, s.v. Sophocles, gives 24; see Pickard–Cambridge, 1968, 41 n. 3, 98–99; Russo, 1994, 187–188.

9 C. Segal, 1995 and 49–55 on the *Women of Trachis* and 180–198 on *Oedipus Tyrannos*.

10 Similarly, the rift between Hippolytus and his father is fixed through the three curses given Theseus by Poseidon (*Hippol.* 887–890).

11 Also in *Children of Heracles* 401ff., although with suspicion. See Goward, 1999, 121–125 on Euripides' diminished use of these devices (for example, eliminating Clytemnestra's dream in his *Electra*) as one way he opens up his material "to display the unpredictable operations of chance" (125).

12 See Griffin, 2006; Chiasson, 2003, 5–35.

reveal a fundamental disconnect between human and divine understanding.[13] Interestingly, the *History* makes it clear that this is not due to divine malevolence. In the story of Croesus, set at the opening of the *History* as a thematic introduction, Apollo's oracle declares that the god desired to help Croesus (1.91), although its responses, like the famous declaration that Croesus' attack would destroy a mighty empire (1.53), invariably mislead him.[14] Nor does the problem lie in Croesus, who, when he is able to step back from the stage of history, is a wise and moderate man. For Herodotus, it seems, human beings fail to comprehend the divine not because men are evil, nor because the gods intend to deceive, but because to one entangled in the mesh of divine causality the language of the gods is simply unintelligible.[15]

This incomprehension will also prove to be a fundamental difference between tragedy and comedy. As we will see in looking at the genres' overall views of the gods, while in tragedy the aim is to understand the divine, in comedy it is to control it. In the case of oracles there is another factor as well. Aristophanes' oracles invert not only tragedy's view of the divine, but also tragedy's sense of language. As we saw in the first chapter, while tragedy often seeks, ideally, an exact correlation between signifier and signified, comedy frees language from any need to correspond to external reality. In contrast to Theseus' wish that humans might have a special voice speaking only truth (*Hippol.* 925–931), for Aristophanes language is a reality on its own, as with Philocleon's clever stories or Dikaiopolis' ability to buy a peace treaty because it has the same name, *sponde*, as a libation. Given this view of language, the oracle turns in comedy from an absolute indication of the divine will to a very fluid instrument of human manipulation, as adept in creating reality as it is in interpreting it. Paradoxically, what remains is the inability of human beings to control, or even completely understand, the language that they themselves have invented.

13 For Herodotus and oracles, Harrison, 2000a, 122–127. Fontenrose, 1978, 120–144 doubts their authenticity.

14 Chiasson, 2003, 6. Herod. 1.5; D. Grene, 1987, 19; How and Wells, 1928, 1.69 for Croesus' importance.

15 Croesus appears favorably both after learning from experience (1.88 ff.), and before, with Adrastus (1.45). D. Grene, 1987, 26: "On the whole, I think that Herodotus believes that the Divine is altogether jealous and prone to trouble us [1.32] because it controls a world in terms that we cannot understand."

1 *Oedipus Tyrannos*: Human and Divine Meaning

In the case of the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, the fulfillment of the oracle, or rather, the discovery that the oracle has been fulfilled, makes up the entire content of the play. Put more directly, the play is about Oedipus discovering what the audience has known all along.[16] As a result, two contrasting levels of understanding run throughout: the divine understanding of who Oedipus is, embodied in the oracles and shared by the audience, and Oedipus' human understanding of what his life means.[17] In contrast to the *Oresteia*, where the human and divine levels work in parallel, these understandings are diametrically opposed, seeing Oedipus as a native, not a stranger, as true-born, not adopted, and as a sufferer, rather than an agent of fate. Even Oedipus' name has two possible meanings, "knower" and "swelled-foot."

The audience of the *Oedipus* is brought into Oedipus' view of his world through Sophocles' use of distractions, partial understandings, and the constant human mediation of the divine voice.[18] The play thus makes us experience both the inevitability of the divine, as the oracle's fulfillment is made plain, and the inevitable gap between human and divine awareness experienced by the chorus: "But Zeus indeed and Apollo, they are knowing, and comprehend / the things of mortals. But of men—that the prophet knows more than I—/ for this there is no true test" (499–501).

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16 C. Segal, 1980, 138: "the *Oedipus Tyrannos* has almost no action carried out on the stage. The "action" is really verbal, the unraveling of the hidden meanings of the ambiguous oracles, prophecies, decrees"; Ormand, 1999, 131: "Oedipus discovers he is guilty of parricide and incest ... less by uncovering certain hitherto obscure empirical facts than by voluntarily appropriating an oracular logic which assumes he has always been guilty." On knowledge and the oracles C. Segal, 1995, 138–160; Goodhart, 1978, 67; Rocco, 1997.

17 For the juxtaposition Goward, 1999, 15 citing Burkert on the *Oedipus*, and 25: "Whoever the onstage narrator of dream or oracle may be, an ultimate narrator is indicated whose authority, however unspecified, must be more than human"; Buxton, 1984, 32: "Oracles are a mode of contact with the gods, but so heavily do they rely on the interpretations of human intermediaries that they illustrate (or are used by Sophocles to illustrate) the shakiness of human knowledge"; Mastronarde, 2010, 174: "there is revealed a tragic gap between the uncertainty, inscrutability, and amorality of the strongest powers in the universe and the human aspiration for certainty, clarity, and the comfort of comprehensible justice."

18 For a similar technique, termed a "narrative loop," in other Sophoclean dramas see Goward, 1999, 87–101. The *Seven against Thebes* also uses the chorus's initial fear for the city to divert attention from Oedipus' curse, as H.D. Cameron, 1971; Hutchinson, *Seven*, xxxi–ii; Sommerstein, 1996b, 116; Thalmann, 1978.

The distractions begin with a striking example of the difference between tragedy's use of the contemporary and comedy's. By opening the play with a recollection of the plague that had struck Athens not long before and, it has been argued, by using a reference to Pericles, Sophocles both leads the audience into the main plot of the play and distracts them from it.[19] As the focus on the city (4, 22, 46, 51, 72) leads into Oedipus' quarrels with Teiresias and Creon, and as these turn into a contest over power, the overtones of the contemporary, like Oedipus' "O *polis, polis*!" (629), focus the audience on the political.[20] Rather than commenting on the contemporary world, however, like Dikaiopolis' cry at *Acharn.* 27, the focus diverts us from the real issue, Oedipus' own history. Sophocles reinforces the division by overlaying what Oedipus sees as the main concern, a struggle for power in Thebes, with a use of irony that reminds the audience of the gap between the understanding of the characters onstage and their own.[21] As a result, when the central issue returns it comes with a new impact, as somehow both known and unexpected.

Sophocles manages to keep the audience's understanding of the oracle in abeyance in a number of other ways as well. Each major revelation of the play occurs, for example, in a context completely unrelated to the revelation, frustrating a natural desire to find a chain of cause and effect. Jocasta enters because of the quarrel between Oedipus and Creon (634–638); Laius' oracle comes up as evidence that Teiresias is not to be feared (707–710); Oedipus' oracle is mentioned to explain why he was at the place where three roads meet (771 ff.); and the fact that Oedipus was a foundling is offered as reassurance that it is safe to return to Corinth (1000–1016). Even the information that Oedipus' legs were pinioned, which reveals the truth to Jocasta, comes up only because the messenger is mildly annoyed at Oedipus' disrespect (1029–1036). And even further, Sophocles frustrates any sense of discovery by having each answer open up a new field of even more pressing questions.[22] By the time Teiresias' and

19 For the dating of the play and its relation to the plague, Schadewaldt, 1935, 18; Knox, 1956 and Esposito, 2007 for a dating to 429.

20 Burian in Goldhill and Hall, 109 points out that "*polis*" is used 25 times up to l. 880 and not thereafter. See Chapter Seven, p. 274, for the opposite movement in *Frogs*.

21 As Oedipus' promise to contend for Laius as if for his own father (264) or Jocasta, 724–725; Pucci in Pucci, 1983, 133: "It is as if [Oedipus'] words were engulfed by an imprinting system that preexisted them and prevents them from saying only what they seem to have been shaped for saying." For riddles and the effect of irony see also Buxton, 1980; Goldhill, 1986, 212; C. Segal, 1981, 236–244, including on Oedipus' name.

22 Ormand, 1999, 128–129: "at the moment of understanding one truth subsumes the other"; Scodel, 1984, 62; Pucci 1992, 200 n. 4.

Creon's honesty is clear, it is no longer important. Jocasta's remark that Laius was of Oedipus' overall form (743) is disregarded in Oedipus' concern about the three roads. And most terribly, by the time the shepherd arrives to say whether one assailant or many was involved in Laius' death, the issue of the murder, the occasion of the entire play, has faded almost to insignificance. In fact, the play never returns to the issue of one assailant or many, because while Oedipus has been pursuing the truth of one horror, the clues to a far greater one have been revealed.

One final means by which Sophocles maintains a sense of divine impenetrability is through a fragmentation of knowledge.[23] The first "knower" of the play, other than Apollo (and Oedipus himself), is Teiresias, who, like the god, knows all, but speaks in riddles (439). Teiresias will abandon his refusal to speak, but only when Oedipus is too angry to hear.[24] From this point on each of the play's characters (apart, ironically, from Creon, whom Oedipus has accused of masterminding everything) proves to have a single piece of knowledge. It is only when, one by one, Jocasta, the messenger from Corinth, the shepherd, and Oedipus himself contribute their pieces to the puzzle that a whole comes to light that none of the knowers, individually, could suspect. The effect appears most vividly in the shepherd, who, as it happens, has two crucial pieces of information.[25] As the sole survivor of the assault, the shepherd knows that Oedipus, the current king of Thebes, murdered Laius. As the man who took the child, he also knows that the son of Laius and Jocasta did not die. To the shepherd the first is so terrible an understanding that it causes him to beg to be sent from the city (758–763). The second, except that it reveals his disobedience, is innocuous. And yet by the time the shepherd arrives this last piece of knowledge is all that matters.

The *Oedipus Tyrannos* thus portrays a profound disconnect between man's understanding of himself and human identity as it is seen by the divine. In 424, not long after the *Oedipus Tyrannos* was staged, Aristophanes also produced

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23 For a similar pattern in the *Women of Trachis*, C. Segal, 2000. Jones, 1962, 170 describes "the flash of perfect clarity" when the oracle is understood; Easterling in Easterling and Knox, 52 describes the sense of inevitability.

24 On Oedipus hearing Teiresias at 447–462 see Dawe, *Oedipus*, 114; Knox, 1980, 321–332; and Creon's question at 528, implying distraction.

25 The importance is measured, at least in part, by Sophocles' willingness to accept the improbability. The coincidence of Polybus' death is allowed not only for plot, but also as set against the death of Oedipus' actual father. See Dawe, *Oedipus*, 6–22 for these and other improbabilities and *contra*, Hall, 2010, 120–121. B. Vickers, 1973, 500–513 lays the pieces out in chart form.

a play that centered on oracles and the need to expel the source of pollution from the city. In so doing he vividly illustrated the difference between using the contemporary as a device to explore a tragic theme and using a tragic theme as a way to address contemporary politics. The play is the *Knights*, and Aristophanes' tragic hero, destroyed, like Oedipus, by an oracle, is Cleon.[26]

2 The Human Oracles of the *Knights*

"My fate, my fate are killing me."[27]

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Aristophanes' *Knights*, like the *Oedipus Tyrannos* (or like the pun above), is meaningful on two different levels: the story of the Paphlagonian slave and his master, Demos, and the story of Cleon and the *demos* of the Athenians.[28] In the *Knights*, however, both of these levels are human, and, as the play is a political allegory, it is the political one that is primary.[29] What is unexpected is that Aristophanes has chosen to incorporate into a purely political play a continual interest in the divine as it is perceived by tragedy. The interest is evident from the opening proof that the gods exist—because how else could Nicias

26 For parallels between *Oedipus Tyrannos* and *Knights* see Knox, 1956, 144–147; Landfester 1967, 26, 75–78; Bennett and Tyrrell, 1990; Adrados, 1975, 52–60. Harriot, 1986, 104 compares Lysistrata's convenient oracle (*Lys.* 765–780). N. Smith, 1989, 140–158, focusing on the political, points out that Aristophanes' human-determined oracles do not imply religious skepticism.

27 The ending of *Oedipus Tyrannos* on the radio comedy show *I'm Sorry I'll Read that Again*. Cited in Taplin, 1978, 192 n. 7.

28 For Cleon, the "Paphlagonian" both not a citizen and blustering (*Knights* 919), MacDowell, 1995, 82, 111; Sommerstein, *Knights*, 3. In contrast to Goldhill, 2009, on Sophocles' concern "with humans' lack of control over narrative and language" (47) *Knights*' different levels of language and meaning are purely human.

29 For similar plays (as *Clouds* 551–559) see Eupolis' *Maricas*, Hermippus' *Bakery Girls* on Hyperbolus and Platon's *Peisandros*; Sommerstein in Harvey and Wilkins, 437–451 and on the *Maricas*, Storey, 2003, 197–214. Ruffell, 2002, 150–154 argues for this approach in Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*, *Cheirones*, *Nemesis*, and *Wealth-givers*; in contrast Bakola, 2010, 181–207. For the play's political side see Edmunds, 1987; Mastromarco in Sommerstein et al., 341–358; Henderson in Winkler and Zeitlin, 293–313.

be godforsaken (*theois echthros*, 34)?—to the final miraculous and Medea-like rejuvenation of Demos.[30] With the introduction of Paphlagon's "secret oracle" (110–126), the play also takes over the oracle as the "big idea" that provides the framework for the plot, culminating in the final oracle competition and Paphlagon's tragic recognition that his oracle has been fulfilled. Throughout, Aristophanes uses the idea of the "hidden meaning" that pervades tragedy's view of the divine, but in regard to an aspect of divinity that tragedy largely neglects—its use as an instrument of human manipulation.

Aristophanes focuses on the human basis of oracles from the first. In the play's initial scene he loads the "secret oracle"—that as hemp seller fell to sheep seller, so must sheep seller fall to a seller of sausage—with as much divine machinery as it can bear, only to then undercut it. The parody, with its elaborate transformation of "hemp seller," "sheep seller" and "leather seller" into oracular terms (see, for example, the "prophetic present" of lines 127, 129, 135, 136), also reflects the basic motif of the *Theogony*, the *Prometheia*, and the *Oresteia*'s great ode to Zeus (as well as Aristophanes' later *Birds*), in which as Ouranos fell to Cronos so must Cronos fall to Zeus.[31] It culminates in the sausage seller's miraculous arrival:

Slave B: A sausage seller? Poseidon, what a trade!
But wherever could such a man be found?
Slave A: Let us then seek him.
Slave B: But here he comes!
Look—like a miracle—into the agora.

144–149

Having elaborately connected the oracle to the divine, Aristophanes uses its immediate fulfillment, "like a miracle" (*kata theon*, 147, cf. Herod. *kata daimona*, 1.111, *theioteros*, 1.122), to skewer the given of any tragic oracle—that in the course of the play it will be fulfilled. It also ridicules, however, the convenient tragic appearance of a character under discussion, as with Creon in the *Oedipus Tyrannos* (with apologies, I quote Jebb for effect):

30 On the slaves as Nicias and Demosthenes see Sommerstein, *Knights*, 3; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 73; MacDowell, 1995, 87–88; and, contrary, Dover, 1959, 196–199; Henderson, *Acharn., Knights*, 222 n. 2.

31 See Silk, 2000, 338–342; Rau, 1967, 169–173 for the parody of oracles. Platter, 2006, 108–142 and 114–123 on *Knights* in particular, surveys Aristophanes' undermining of oracular and epic authority.

Oedipus: And already, when the lapse of days is reckoned, it troubles me what he doth; for he tarries strangely beyond the fitting space. But when he comes, then shall I be no true man if I do not all that the god shows.
Priest: Nay, in season hast thou spoken; at this moment these sign to me that Creon draws near.
Oedipus: O king Apollo, may he come to us in the brightness of saving fortune, even as his face is bright!
73–81

In ridiculing, together, a tragic character's entry and the fulfillment of the oracle, the sausage seller's arrival suggests another kind of hidden meaning, that the ultimate source of the oracle's truth may depend as much on plot construction as it does on the gods.

The *Knights* makes it clear that its oracles, corresponding to comedy's overall view of language, are about human rather than divine control. The culminating oracle contest (960–1099, 1230–1252) ends a series of competitions between Paphlagon and the sausage seller in which they top each other in threats, insults, and vice (274–374, and see 461–471), in proposals to the Assembly (624–682), in protestations of love (763–821), and finally in gifts to Demos (871–921, 1100–1225). The focus is the ability of either to produce any needed oracle at will, as in the sausage seller's topping Paphlagon's chest full of oracles with an attic and two apartment buildings full (1000–1001). Thus the sausage seller counters Paphlagon's oracle that Demos shall wear a crown of roses (965–966) with an oracle that he will wear a diadem and embroidered purple robe (967–969); in response to Paphlagon/Cleon's favorite "watchdog" oracle,[32] the sausage seller produces one about a scavenging dog (1015–1034); and when Paphlagon produces the eagle oracle that Demos requested at 1012–1030, the sausage seller goes him one better:

Paph.: But I have an oracle about you that is winged,
that you will become as an eagle, and o'er all the earth be king.
SS: Me too: over the earth *and* over the sea that is Red
and as far as Ecbatana will you judge, licking up cakes.
1086–1089

32 Sommerstein, *Knights*, 198; hence also "Cuon" in *Wasps* 894 ff.

As the game continues, Aristophanes continues to focus on the very human construction of oracles by moving into a demonstration of creative interpretation. Even the oracular "lion" and "wooden walls," familiar from the prophecies about Pericles and the Persian War (1037–1040, Herod. 6.131, 7.141), are turned into "Antileon" and a pillory (1044–1049), transforming the meaning of "guard" (*phulatto*) and "save" (*sozein*) into "incarcerate," as in what Athens should do to Cleon. Nor is intelligibility any help. When Paphlagon converts the (actual) ancient saying about a "Pylos before Pylos" into a reference to his own (or rather, Cleon's) victory there, the sausage seller reconverts it into a "pile of tubs" (*puelos*, "bathtub," 1060). As the scene comes to a climax, the "fox cubs" of the penultimate oracle are shown to refer, in quick succession, to Paphlagon, to the fleet, and to soldiers on campaign (1067–1079). Demos does not so much as bat an eyelash.

At the same time that he makes it clear that Paphlagon and the sausage seller can produce both oracles and interpretations at will, Aristophanes also ensures that we remember the alleged connection to the divine. As the contest heats up it moves from oracles to dreams of the goddess (1090 ff., and see 903) and then to her goodies (1169 ff.). In what has been established as the usual pattern, whatever gifts Paphlagon produces from Athena, the sausage seller doubles.[33] This reminder that the "divine," like the oracles, has a purely political basis (reflected in Demos' comment, "Nice of her to remember the [Panathenaic] robe," 1180) leads into and colors the "tragic" oracle that will finally cause Paphlagon's fall. The emphasis brings out the humor, not only in underlining the fact that Paphlagon will be hoist by his own petard, but also, and most importantly, by reminding us that the petard itself is purely illusory.

A sense of the overall sweep of *Knights*, including the scenes just discussed, is critical to a sense of what Aristophanes is doing in the scene of Paphlagon's fall. In and of themselves, the final oracles of the *Knights* resemble the opening one:

> Slave A: Yea, but when the raw-hided crook-taloned eagle shall seize
> in its beak the serpent, dim of wit, and fierce blood-guzzler,
> even then from amidst the Paphlagonians perisheth soon the garlic breather

33 Countering "Pylos-cookie" (1166–1167) with "Goddess-spoon bread" (1168–1169), the Goddess' "Pylisade" pea soup with watchful beef broth (1171–1174), and her fish-fillet and roll with beef and tripe (1177–1179) topped off with a good measure of "Tritogenated" wine (1189).

and to sellers of tripe furnisheth the god glory in abundance,
unless it should happen rather that they prefer to sell sausages.

SS: Well, how does all that apply to me? Tell me.

197–201

Paphlagon: Mark, o child of Erectheus, the way of the prophecies sent thee by Apollo, shrieking from sanctuary through great-priced tripods: save thou the watchdog, holy, he of the saw-teeth, he bids thee, who gaping before thee and terribly barking, all for thy sake, provides you with pay. And should he not, he perisheth; for many despise him, the jackdaws that croak in their hatred.

Demos: That one, by Demeter, I don't get at all. What does Erectheus have to do with jackdaws and a watchdog?

1015–1022

In both cases the humor lies in the alleged obscurity, the recipient's mystification, and the juxtaposition of lofty oracular speech with the mundane "unless they prefer to sell sausages" or "provides you with pay." By the end of the play, however, when it has become clear that the meaning of the oracle is whatever the oracle-monger wants it to be, the mystification has an added charge.

What has emerged between the two sets of oracles is the purely human basis of speech. Aristophanes has proceeded, *seriatim*, through lies, denunciations, abuse, slander, and shouting. All are similar in that they are performative (in a broad sense of the word) rather than descriptive: the words are meant to create reality rather than describe it. In an extreme (and extremely funny) example, the sausage seller wins over the Assembly by announcing that sprats are cheap (642–645), and then has the Assembly itself make that happen (647–650).[34] In this way Aristophanes has opened up for us the hidden meaning of oracles: they are political rhetoric dressed up in hexameters, and their aim, like that of all political rhetoric, is to create the reality that they claim to be describing.[35]

The return to the theme of oracles at the end of the *Knights* makes it clear that the oracles, like Philocleon's "amusing stories" in the *Wasps*, exist not to

34 Sommerstein, *Knights*, 179 explains that impounding the bowls (650) drives the price down since no one could carry the sprats home.

35 Thus at 1051 there is no way to know where Paphlagon's voice stops and the oracle begins, like the purely human "omen" of *Knights* 28. See Slater, 2002, 78–79 on the oracle scene as an extension of the earlier trading of abuse; Platter, 2006, 118–123 on the comic touches of the oracles from 1015–1095.

convey information, but as a way of controlling the listener. On this level Aristophanes makes much the same point as Thucydides, when he describes the oracle that predicted plague (*loimos*) or famine (*limos*) in Athens—depending on which happened (Thuc. 2.54). If Aristophanes' approach is funnier, it is because Paphlagon and the sausage seller are so completely unembarrassed about simply making the oracles say what they wish.[36]

It is also here, however, that the *Knights*' view of the oracles proves to be a good deal more complex than Thucydides'. One might have expected Aristophanes to divide his characters between the gullible, like Demos, who are taken in by the oracles, and the wily, like the sausage seller and Paphlagon, who manipulate them. Instead, every character in the play both knows that the oracles are invented and accepts, with perfect seriousness, that they point to an inescapable necessity.[37] The two slaves who open the play mock Paphlagon's oracles—"He sings his oracles, and the old man sibyls in response" (61)—and then find their salvation in them. Demos is obsessed with oracles, yet his request for "the one that I enjoy so much / about how I shall become an eagle in the clouds" (1012–1013) makes it clear that he knows (as at 1121 ff.) that the point is flattery, not information. And Paphlagon himself, who invents prophecies at the drop of a hat, immediately accepts annihilation as soon as his oracle is fulfilled. Aristophanes thus reveals two opposed views regarding the oracle: the skeptical view that sees oracle-mongers as frauds, and the accepting view that sees the oracle as conveying a divine necessity. The anomaly is that the same people believe both.

Although (obviously) exaggerated, the picture seems to reflect Athenian reality. Oracles in Athens were a part not only of drama, but also of ordinary life, and played a particularly important role in politics.[38] The oracles that

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36 Ruffell, 2011, 73: "There is no doubt here that Paphlagon and the sausage seller are not only exploiting and interpreting oracles, but inventing them"; for similar shamelessness, Paphlagon's "But I stole for the good of the city!" (1226) and for comparison to Thucydides, Trugaios to the (historical) oracle-monger Hierocles: "Never shalt thou dine more in the Prytaneum / nor from that which has been done make later prophecy" (*Peace* 1084–1085).

37 Paphlagon's downfall and the sausage seller's parallel success, both due to believing in the oracle (as 195 ff.), makes Slater's (2002, 81–82) sense of a contrast unlikely.

38 As Thucydides 2.21, 2.54, 5.26, 8.1, extending even to appearances of the gods, as Herod. 1.60. Bowden, 2005, 133: "Delphi's role in revealing the will of the gods to the Athenians was therefore a vital part of their political and military activities, as well as their religious life"; Edmunds, 1987, 40–41 on the connection of Athena to imperialism; Mikalson, 1991, 156: "Virtually all Greeks, and particularly the Athenians in the fifth century, thought that

depicted Athens as a wineskin (963) or an eagle (1013) were real, as was the saying about a "Pylos before Pylos" (1057).[39] It is also likely that the *Knights* parodies not only the oracles of tragedy, but also Cleon's actual use of oracles to gain his political ends.[40] And, it seems, one and the same person could view these oracles in quite different ways. Even Thucydides admits that an oracle correctly predicted that the war would last twenty-seven years (5.26), while Herodotus, who sees a divine necessity in the oracles, is perfectly comfortable describing a crucial oracle as the product of bribery (5.62).[41] It is likely, then, that many Athenians both distrusted the oracles and were wary of disregarding them. Which is no more than to say that they were able to see the truth both in tragedy, in which oracles are divine, and in comedy, in which they are made up by human beings.

It is here as well that the paradox of the *Knights* arises. In the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, Oedipus encounters the necessity of the divine in finding that the oracle is not only correct, it has already been fulfilled. In the *Knights*, in contrast, the oracle is fulfilled simply because the slaves find a sausage seller to fulfill it, and enlist the help of the knights to make it happen. Aristophanes reminds us of this at precisely the point of Paphlagon's fall by having one of the slaves suddenly reappear and tell the sausage seller: "Remember, / you have become a *man* through me" (1254–1256).[42] This purely human fulfillment is further emphasized in Paphlagon himself. As the sausage seller turns out to have each of the qualities described in the oracle, Paphlagon responds not by concluding that his fall must come, but rather, in one more great example of human agency, by staging it himself:

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their states enjoyed the goodwill of the gods, and they made efforts to maintain that happy relationship."

39 For the wineskin, Plutarch, *Theseus* 24.5; Strabo 8.3.7 for the Pylos saying. The eagle oracle, quoted in the scholium, is used again at *Birds* 978, 987 and fr. 241; see Sommerstein, *Knights*, 195, 197, 201 and Harriot, 1986, 105–106 on the reminder that tragic poets and politicians both exploit oracles.

40 Sommerstein, *Knights*, 148; MacDowell, 1995, 90, 111, although there is little evidence aside from Aristophanes. On Cleon's possible use of dreams as well see 809, 1090–1091; Sommerstein, *Knights*, 187.

41 Similarly, Pisistratus seems to seize upon the oracle of the tunny-fish largely because hesitation would be fatal (Herod. 1.62–63). Herodotus may even imply that Themistocles' sudden insight into the "wooden walls" oracle is connected to his long-standing support of Athenian naval power (7.143–144, as Plutarch, *Themist.* 10).

42 Other manuscripts give these lines to the chorus, with similar effect; see Sommerstein, *Knights*, 209.

> Alas, thus is fulfilled the very prophecy the god proclaimed!
> Wheel now within this ill-starred luckless soul.
> O crown, farewell, begone, though 'gainst my will
> 'st that I leave thee. Haply one shalt take thee, some other
> man, no greater thief, but luckier perchance.
>
> 1248–1252

Not only does Paphlagon, who has invented half the oracles of the play, still believe he is doomed by one, he insists on hogging the stage to milk the full effect of the fulfillment.

In contrast to the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, where the apparently unrelated oracles received by Creon, Laius, and Oedipus all prove to have a single meaning, Paphlagon and the sausage seller grab indiscriminately from their oracle piles, employing whichever ones come to hand and throwing the used ones away. In the one case where there is a coming together of elements, the "secret oracle" that destroys Paphlagon, the hidden meaning turns out to be simply what we knew all along, that the Athenians choose the vilest leaders possible (180 ff., 1232 ff.). There is no fragmentation of truth here, since the multiple understandings offered by Paphlagon and the sausage seller are all equally valid and equally arbitrary. There is no tragic irony, because there is no greater whole. But Aristophanes' comic point seems finally to go even beyond all this. The characters in *Knights* create their own oracles, but the oracles direct their lives all the same. As we will see again in looking at the comic view of the gods, human beings require something that can give human life meaning, even if this meaning can destroy them, and even if this meaning is one that they have to invent for themselves.

3 Hidden Meanings and the Rejuvenation of Demos

A primary theme of the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, brought out through Sophocles' use of the oracle, is the fundamental disconnect between Oedipus' understanding of himself and his true identity as it is seen by the gods. The same theme, in its comic version, appears in *Knights* in the uncovering of Paphlagon/Cleon's true identity as the source of Athens's misfortunes. In the case of the sausage seller and Demos, Aristophanes takes the theme of a hidden identity even further. Aristophanes concludes a gradual transformation of the sausage seller from the vilest of the vile to the savior of Athens by linking his comic hero with himself, a connection common in the hero's final victory celebration. Similarly, the reminders of the Persian War that have run throughout hint that Demos'

rejuvenation is also the revelation of his true but hidden identity as leader of the Athens of old. In a final inversion of tragedy, Aristophanes shows us not a noble king who proves, like Oedipus, to be the most wretched of men, but rather the reverse. Both Demos and the sausage seller, who seemed the lowliest of comic butts, emerge as triumphant leaders, and even, in the case of Demos, as king (1330, 1333). The conclusion, however, remains subject to Aristophanes' sardonic take on what such a triumph might imply.

As is natural to a play that is, above all, a political allegory, the *Knights* is filled with "hidden meanings" that, in this case, Aristophanes imbues with "tragic" overtones. In general, and in striking contrast to Demos' final rejuvenation, the result is a rather black irony. The first instance occurs with the sausage seller's refusal to believe that "I / being a sausage seller, could become a *man*" (157–213, and see 391–392, 1254–1255). In fact, however, the sausage seller has failed to understand the true significance of his trade. Not only is vileness itself a qualification for leadership in Athens (183–193, 217–220), it is precisely his ability "to stir things up and make mincemeat of them" (213–216, and see 307–310, 358, 363–364, 431, 692, 840, 864–867) that makes him Athens's natural leader.[43]

A similarly hidden truth resides in the oracle that brings Paphlagon down. The oracle gives us a divine pattern played out in the degeneration of Athenian politicians from hemp sellers to sheep sellers to hide sellers to sausage sellers. As the play proceeds we discover that the pattern points to something deeper. Demos, as he himself declares (1115–1130), finds bombast entertaining and encourages flattery. Above all, as we see in the comic loading up of the old man with props, Demos likes things, and so is appropriately served by their sellers.[44] And in fact, in a sudden and surprising turnaround, Demos declares that he deliberately uses his stewards for his own benefit (1121–1150).[45] The passage adds an element of "tragic" irony to the play. As the sausage seller discovers that his job is, in the deepest sense, to make mincemeat, so Paphlagon is revealed by Demos' speech to be actually the slave that he thought he was only in name. And, as in the irony of Oedipus' declaration that he will fight for Laius as for his father (264), the succession of sellers, and the roles of

43 For this use of *tarratein*, with other examples, see Sommerstein *Knights*, 154.

44 Ruffell, 2011, 184 ff.

45 For explanations see, as validating Demos, MacDowell, 1995, 106–107; as preparing for validation, Slater, 2002, 79–80; as a criticism, Reinders, 1995, Harriott, 1986, 101–102; as undercutting the play's irony, Dover, 1972, 98–99. Although Demos' increasing agency (821–822, 945–948, 1011–1013) somewhat prepares for it, the turnaround is marked, particularly as Demos is ashamed of having been duped at 1339–1355.

"master" and "slave," have a further hidden significance: the leaders that Demos gets are exactly the ones that he pays for (43–45).

The theme of hidden meaning is ubiquitous in *Knights*, from Paphlagon's demand to speak first (336–341, 475–481), made in ignorance of the deeper reality that in Greek drama the second speaker wins, to his warning that believing the sausage seller will make Demos a "leather bottle" (962–963), like the wineskin, wave-tossed but not submerged, of the oracle on Athens (Plutarch, *Theseus*, 24.5; Scholia *Knights* 963). The most pointed use of the theme, however, as we saw in Chapter One, is the revelation that the sausage seller, like Ajax, Pentheus, Helen (as *Agam.* 681–698), or here Nikoboulos (*Knights* 615), has a fateful name, a revelation delayed until the end of the play. Despite more obvious meanings such as "Chosen from the Agora" or "Chosen by the Assembly," the sausage seller interprets his name, Agoracritus, as meaning "Disputing in the Agora" (1258).[46] The interpretation is profounder than he knows. As the play has revealed, by setting up the Assembly as a contest, the *demos* in fact gives its leadership to the one who, like Agoracritus, proves best at public quarrelling.[47]

The last example of hidden meaning emerges in the play's final revelation of human agency. Aristophanes has positioned Demos, the audience, the sausage seller, and himself as "us," and Cleon, the Paphlagonian now alone at the city gates (1397 ff.), as "them." In other words, in a reference he makes explicit, he has made Cleon his *pharmakos* or scapegoat (1405), a role many scholars have seen Oedipus as fulfilling.[48] There is, however, an important difference between the tragic and the comic version. The strange conception of the *Knights*, and the hidden meaning it finds in Paphlagon's banishment, is that ejecting the scapegoat, who has been humiliated, beaten, and driven from the city, will purify it because the person ejected was responsible for the city's problems

46 For the delay as emphasizing the joke see Olson, 1992; for Agoracritus as "Chosen by the Assembly" Henderson, *Acharn., Knights*, 387 and for the significance of names in comedy and tragedy, Chapter One.

47 See, for example, the "Peter Principle," that free enterprise allows everyone to rise to the level of their incompetence.

48 Bennett and Tyrell 1990, 248–252 on the "*pharmakos*" ending as "driving out pollution and welcoming in prosperity" (249); Rosenbloom, 2002, 322–323; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 74–75; R. Rosen, 1988, 21–24. Overall, see Burkert, 1991, 19–21; Girard, 1977; Kirkwood, 1994, 297–299, against Girard. For Oedipus, a view that has lost popularity, Burian in Goldhill and Hall; Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 127 ff.; Goldhill, 1986, 210–211; C. Segal, 2001, 114–115, 121, 163–166 and against, Taplin, 1983b, 170–171; R. Drew Griffith, 1993, 94–114 (98 n. 17 for a bibliography). On Pentheus, Burnett, 1970; Seaford, 1994, 311–318; and Seaford, 1994, 281–327 for the topic as programmatic in tragedy.

in the first place. Even in the institution of ostracism it does not seem that Athenian thought had ever stretched so far.

Despite the sausage seller's comforting words (1356–1357), the "tragic ironies" uncovered in the *Knights*, such as the true implications of the *demos*'s purchased servants or the unexampled idea of using the evildoer himself as a scapegoat, all point to the *demos*'s own responsibility for the condition that Athens is in. As Sommerstein among others has pointed out, amid the wild inconsistencies in both Demos and the sausage seller's characters, the one constant is that Demos gets the leader he/it deserves.[49] As we will see in the next chapter, Aristophanes' later plays, *Peace* and *Birds*, resemble *Knights* in moving our attention from divine to human agency. Unlike Trugaios' uncovering of Peace, however, or Peisetairos' victory over Zeus in *Birds*, in *Knights* the triumphant side of the redirection is markedly lacking. For a playwright looking to win a competition, this is a problem. The sausage seller after all, despite the fun of his wickedness, has been cast as the audience's champion against Cleon, making the revelation that it is his baseness that leads to his success less than satisfying. And since the audience *is* the *demos*, it cannot be expected to enjoy for very long the revelation that Demos has created his own downfall.

With Paphlagon's tragic farewell, Aristophanes appears to have painted himself into a corner. Having conquered by proving himself the most base of the base, the sausage seller should be primed (as he himself promised, 356–361) for outdoing even Cleon in bribery, thievery, and generally hoodwinking the *demos*. Had the principles of comedy included consistency, either of purpose or of character, the result would be inevitable. As it happens, of course, they do not. Instead the play reveals, alongside Paphlagon/Cleon's true identity as scapegoat, the true identity of the sausage seller/Aristophanes as the savior of Athens, and the true identity of Demos as the "violet-crowned" Marathon-fighting Athens of old.[50] The bridge is the theme of human agency: since the *demos* is the cause of its own tribulations, it can also be, with Aristophanes' help, the source of its own renewal. One element of this miraculous renewal, its implementation by Aristophanes, will prove unambiguous. The other, Athens's return to the glory of old, is more complicated.

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49 Sommerstein, *Knights*, 2–3 and, for blaming the *demos* itself, see the Conclusion.

50 Beautifully staged by Demos' reemergence on the very *ekkuklema* that carried Paphlagon out, as Sommerstein, 1980b. A.M. Bowie, 1993, 71–72 points out that the sausage seller's career follows the Panathenaea. On the turnaround see Landfester, 1967, 62; Krauss, 1985, 190 n. 265; MacDowell, 1995, 106, who argues that dramatic coherence is not the point; Brock, 1986 for a "double plot"; Reinders, 1995 and P.D. Arnott, 1970, 39 as gaining the favor of the audience; Whitman, 1964, 101–102 as disappointing.

Given Aristophanes' tendency to identify himself with his hero (to various comic ends) and given an opposition to Cleon which is nearly programmatic (both vividly exhibited in the previous year's *Acharnians*), it would come as no surprise to the audience that just as Paphlagon, now exposed as a thief and scapegoat, is actually Cleon, so the sausage seller, who has been revealed to be the savior of Athens, is Aristophanes himself.[51] The identification, prepared by a subtle diminution in the sausage seller's "vileness," is effected through a technique repeated in the *Wasps*, by suddenly loading him with all the good advice associated with the playwright.[52] Thus, as in *Banqueters* (and later in *Clouds*), the sausage seller has Demos reject the sophistry and quibbling of the Sophists (1373–1383).[53] As in *Babylonians*, his Demos is to be the monarch, rather than, as Pericles and Cleon would have it, the tyrant, of Greece (1319, 1330, Thuc. 2.63, 3.37, and see 1114).[54] And as in the *Acharnians' parabasis* (676 ff., as later in *Wasps*), Demos is to reject the law courts (1316–1317, 1360) in favor of his new reward, a well-hung boy and a pair of buxom young Peace Treaties (1388–1391), recalling the triumphant peace treaty (also for thirty years) of the *Acharnians*—though in this case, unlike the ambivalent Dikaiopolis, Demos is to return to the countryside where he belongs (1394–1395). Most of all, however, and encompassing all these, the sausage seller has Demos regain the glory he had of old, as in Aristophanes' usual celebration of the Marathon-fighters (*Acharn.* 692–702) and the values of the past.

The identification of the sausage seller with Aristophanes at the end of the *Knights* is a natural one, and matches the account in the *parabasis* of how Aristophanes himself only gradually revealed his identity as comic poet. Moreover, the unusual device of introducing a second *parabasis* only a hundred

51 Ruffell, 2002, 150 and 2001, 78; Reckford, 1987, 119–120; for cooking images leading to this, Newiger, 1957, 27–30; Taillardat, 1965. Cratinus trumped this move the next year, making himself the hero of the victorious *Wineflask*.

52 See Chapter Four, section two, for Aristophanes similarly associating himself with Bdelycleon. The new role is prepared with the move from slanging contest to love-contest, which may caricature a claim of Cleon's to be a lover of the people as Connor, 1992, 96–98.

53 *Clouds* 528–529; Rusten, 2011, 301, fr. 205, 206, 225, 235; Henderson, *Fragments*, 205.

54 Hence the sausage seller is "defender of the islands" (1319), see *Acharn.* 641–645; Aristophanes fr. 71; Rusten, 2011, 288; Henderson, *Fragments*, 141. See Welsh, 1990; Edmunds, 1987 for the *Knights*' imperialist strain, and, for Aristophanes' (much-debated) sympathy with the allies the caricatures of the *episkopos* and decree seller in *Birds* (1021–1055), *Peace* 169–172, 760. Norwood, 1930, on the *Babylonians* rightly qualifies Aristophanes' support as also Forrest in Levick and Storey, 2003, 216–230. Aristophanes may well design the remark so that each member of the audience can take it in his own way.

lines from the end of the play (1264–1315) reminds us that the sausage seller is not the only one seeking to win the favor of the *demos* by reviling evildoers (described as the comic poet's job at 1274–1289).[55] Nor is it inappropriate that all of this is the work of one (comic poet or sausage seller) who, exactly because he plays the rogue, can also be the city's redeemer. But while the sausage seller's final triumph as the new leader of Athens can double as Aristophanes' (projected) triumph in the comic competition, taking a comic poet as one's chief advisor still presents some complexities. In the case of the *Knights*, the difficulty is that the triumphant rejuvenation that Aristophanes produces is, by definition, impossible.

Demos' rejuvenation, which reverses the fatal "boiling down" (1321) of Pelias by his daughters, is set squarely within the theme of a hidden identity revealed. The rejuvenation follows the pattern of irony in the play by bringing to pass, in a way greater than Demos could know, his own earlier words to the sausage seller (themselves borrowed from Sophocles' *Peleus*): "And now I turn myself over to you here / to babysit my old age (*gerontagogein*) and educate me anew (*palin*)" (1098–1099). The further sense of a hidden identity has been prepared by continual references to the great Athenian past, from the early reference to Themistocles' suicide (84), through references to Marathon, Salamis, Cimon, Themistocles, and Miltiades (407, 781, 785, 812–819, 884, 1040, 1312, 1325, 1350–1353), to the greeting of the rejuvenated Demos as worthy of Marathon (1334).[56] The aristocratic chorus of knights also reminds us of the old Athens in their appeal to their fathers' glory (565–576), while their transformation (or rather their horses' transformation, 595–611) into sailors suggests Cimon's dedication of his bridle in deference to Themistocles' advocacy of the navy (Plutarch, *Cimon*, 5). Even the *parabasis*, albeit with tongue in cheek, berates Athens for not honoring the greatness of the past in the person of her comic poets (518–541). In this way, despite its suddenness, the rejuvenation forms a natural conclusion to the play.

The complication lies in the model Aristophanes has chosen, which is Medea's deceiving the daughters of Pelias into thinking they can renew their father's youth.[57] It is essentially a given of Greek poetry that youth cannot be

55 In *Birds* (1058–1117), *Peace* (1127–1190), *Clouds* (1113–1130) or *Wasps* (1265–1291) the second *parabasis* divides the play into thirds. *Acharnians*, along with a regular second *parabasis* at 971–999, contains a pseudo-*parabasis* at 1143–1173, to cover Lamachus' time in battle and Dikaiopolis' at his feast.

56 Also Ullius, son of Cimon (407) and the Theseum, where Cimon placed Theseus' bones (1312).

57 Ruffell, 2011, 208.

recaptured, since to regain youth is tantamount to defying mortality. Hence the impossibility of Asclepius giving life to the dead (*Agam.* 1022–1024), of Orpheus regaining Eurydice, of Tithonus having his youth, of the attempts to make Achilles or Demophoon (*Hymn to Demeter* 231–262) immortal, or of Odysseus accepting Calypso's offer.[58] In tragedy any such attempt must fail because it is, essentially, an attempt to reverse time, the force that defeats Ajax and, in the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, inevitably finds Oedipus out (1213). This aspect of the rejuvenation is also the one that Aristophanes emphasizes, as the sausage seller insists that Demos, adorned with the epithets "violet-crowned" and "gleaming" that Aristophanes inveighed against the year before (*Knights*, 1323, 1329; *Acharn.* 636–640), now actually inhabits the Athens of the past (1323–1335).

This is not to say that the finale is merely ironic. In accordance with Aristophanes' usual ability to have it both ways, the emotional response of the audience to the splendid reappearance of Demos, like the audience's response to Peisetairos' or Dikaiopolis' triumphs, ensures that first and foremost the ending will be felt as a celebration. It is just that this particular quintessentially impossible aspiration may be felt as something else as well.[59]

A primary theme of the *Knights* is the revelation that the oracle conveys not an absolute, if impenetrable, truth, but rather what human language conveys, a desire to be taken for reality. Aristophanes returns to this theme at the end of the play. The boiling down of Demos not only reverses tragedy in regard to the story of Medea and Pelias, it also reverses tragedy's view of language. That language is a human creation is apparent in the sophistic coinages in *-ikos* parodied by Demos (1375–1380) and then by the sausage seller: "So I suppose you're give-the-finger-ative (*katadaktulikos*) to that bletherative (*laletikou*) lot?" (1381, Sommerstein). That language shapes reality is apparent in the "folder" (*okladion*) that can be either a stool folded for resting on or a boy folded, or

58 As far back as Gilgamesh's loss of the plant "The-old-man-becomes-a-young-man." Hence Medea's successful boiling of Aeson leads to Pelias, as Ovid, *Met.* 7.159 ff.; see Griffiths, 2006, 23–25, 45–46 for the popularity of the theme, particularly on vases. Edmunds, 1987, 43–49 sees the transformation as purely positive, implying an Ionian domination of Greece; MacDowell 104 n. 41 as not literal, although Stone, 1981, 402–403, 406–407 and Rusten, 2011, 424 see Demos as acquiring a new mask as well as a new costume; and see Olson, 1990a, 60–67. Despite E. Segal, 2001, literal rejuvenation is not common in Aristophanes; even Philocleon is "young again" primarily in heart. For visual parodies of rejuvenation Brommer, 1959, 38; Webster, 1950, 86; Rusten, 2011, 442; Kossatz-Deissman, 2000, 187–204.

59 See Burian in Carter for the ending as not merely fantasy, but as affirming democracy.

crouching, for erotic ends (1334–1336). Finally, in one of Aristophanes' favorite moves, a female abstraction, here a *sponde* or peace treaty, becomes an actual female, and Demos converts the "thirty-years" (*triakontoutidas*) of its duration to a promise to "tri-pole" (*katatriakontoutisai*) her sexually (1388–1391).[60] This return to the theme of language has an important implication for the finale. For while Aristophanes promises that, unlike Cleon or Hyperbolus (739, 1300–1315, 1363), his recreation of Athens through language is good for the city, it remains a recreation in words only.[61]

Aristophanes is a master of comic fantasy. As the *parabasis* reminds us, however, comedy, not fantasy, is his main job. The difference is that even while Aristophanes is indulging us in the vicarious enjoyment of a private peace, a kingdom of our own to which even the gods are subject, or the dream of living once more in the grand old days of yore, he also reminds us that it is only a dream, a purely human creation.[62] In this way the picture of human freedom that he presents matches the necessity of a tragedy like the *Oedipus Tyrannos*. Tragedy reveals the necessity of the divine, but it also reflects a deep strain of human resistance and the need human beings feel to find a human meaning in the cosmos. This is apparent in the *Oedipus Tyrannos* in particular, and continued much later in the *Oedipus at Colonus*.[63] The *Knights* takes the opposite approach: it sets our desire to find a deeper meaning outside of ourselves against our knowledge, deep down, that rejuvenation is possible only because we are the ones that made up the story.

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60 Sommerstein, *Knights*, 219.

61 See Hesk, 2001, 255–258; Connor, 1992, 180–183.

62 A.M. Bowie, 1993, 16–17: "the plays offer a vision of release from constraints, but also show where it can lead if unchecked"; Goldhill, 1991, 188: "The shifting levels of fictional representation—a hallmark of comedy—cannot be reduced to mere 'comic inversion.'" See N. Grene, 1980, 210–213 for fantasy exploiting the irrational basis of the human; Rothfield, 1999, xxxiv for the tension between fantasy and its consequences; Ruffell in Harvey and Wilkins, 473–506 for the complexity of the utopian in Old Comedy.

63 Knox, 1998, 196: "Sophocles' tragedy presents us with a terrible affirmation of man's subordinate position in the universe and at the same time with a heroic vision of man's victory in defeat"; C. Segal, 2001, 117–120; Burian in Goldhill and Hall, 99–118 for this tension played out in the uncertainty of the ending and Lowe in Silk, 1996, 524–525; Dodds, 1966, 37–49 on contrasting attempts to read the *Oedipus Tyrannos* in terms of *hybris* or a tragic flaw.

4 Comedy and Carnival *or* Tragedy Upside Down

Old Comedy likes inversions. The elevation of an ordinary, oppressed citizen like Dikaiopolis or the even more lowly sausage seller and the debasement of Cleon or the (for Aristophanic purposes) mighty general Lamachus have parallels throughout Aristophanes. This tendency, in combination with an interest in the inverted world of carnival, has made an association between Attic comedy and carnival all but inevitable.[64] On this view, it seems, comedy takes the city as it stands and turns it upside down. As we saw in the first chapter, the "uglification" of comedy, like the *komos* processions that preceded it, invites a comparison with the ordinary world—Paphlagon against Cleon, the Lamachus or Euripides of *Acharnians* against the real people seated in the audience, and perhaps "Nicias" and "Demosthenes" against their counterparts in the front seats. But while comedy invites a comparison with the ordinary world, that comparison is not always an inversion, and it is far from clear that the relation of Old Comedy to the city was one of carnival. The comparisons we have made so far between comedy and tragedy suggest another possibility, that while comedy stands itself up against both the ordinary world and tragedy, it is generally tragedy, rather than the day-to-day life of Athens, that it chooses to invert.

As a number of commentators have pointed out, there are many reasons not to view the City Dionysia as a carnival. Far from being a spontaneous expression of folk culture, in which, as Bakhtin says, the people do not watch, but are, the show, the City Dionysia was a carefully state-sponsored event, designed, at least in part, to celebrate the *polis*.[65] Moreover, while Athenian comedy

64 See, for example, Carrière, 1979; Suárez, 1987, 105–111; Platter, 1993 and 2006; Sutton, 1980a, 1–12, 78–79; A.T. Edwards in Scodel; von Möllendorf 1995, 222–266; Dobrov in Dobrov, 1995 and Murphy, 1972 for popular entertainment more generally. For the upside-down of carnival Burke, 1978, 178–204 and for Aristophanes' "ritual" inversions, Bowie, 1993, 11–12. It is often forgotten that tragedy, in this sense, is also "festive," as Zimmermann in Slater and Zimmermann, 48–49: "The values transmitted by tragedy are subverted by comedy. Both functions, affirmation and subversion, complement one another and form a *palintonos harmonia*, a harmony in tension. As modern anthropologists have demonstrated (Turner 1982), in a closed society, the members find their identity in the group both by the transmission of traditional values and their destruction on the occasion of certain festivities."

65 Bakhtin, 1968, 7: "carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people, they live in it." See also Haliwell, 2008, 204–206, 250; Rösler, 1986 and A.T. Edwards in Scodel, 90 on Bahktin's neglect of Aristophanes. Henderson in Winkler and Zeitlin, 271–313; A.T. Edwards in Scodel, 89–117; and Goldhill, 1991, 176–188 in regard to city sponsorship. For non-carnival views, Silk, 2000,

(like Athenian tragedy) necessarily appealed to the ordinary populace, and while comedy may well have begun in popular celebrations, as a genre, Old Comedy, like tragedy, was formed by educated and well-born playwrights.[66] Aristophanes was highly conscious of his role as a comic poet. It is clear from his references to his predecessors and rivals that he sees comedy as a clearly defined and rather aristocratic profession, not as a spontaneous popular release.

One solution might be that Old Comedy is an institutionalized form of subversion—that is, carnival as a safety valve rather than as a popular outburst.[67] But while this may be true to some extent, it does not seem sufficient. In the first place, Athenian democracy was hardly crying out for a safety valve. An Athenian did not need a special outlet for free speech, since *parrhesia*, or the freedom to speak one's mind, was an intrinsic part of Athenian citizenship.[68] And while Athenian democracy was far from all-inclusive, its exclusivity does not solve the problem. Although Aristophanes' comedy has deep links to women, and although the "clever slave" of New Comedy occasionally pops up, there seems little doubt that Aristophanes writes, and directs, primarily with an eye to adult male citizens, exactly the population for whom *parrhesia* was designed.[69]

There is also another problem, which is that Aristophanes is on both sides. Although his subversive humor might serve as a safety valve, Aristophanes also presents himself, explicitly, as the champion of the city.[70] When Aristophanes tells us, as he does over and over again, that his comedy can rescue the city, the comment may be a joke, but it is a meaningful one. If Aristophanes subverts the

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298–299; Bremer in Bremer and Handley; for Aristophanes as nonetheless carnivalesque Newman, 1997, 227–240; Schareika, 1978; Schwinge, 1983 and for a survey of views, Platter, 1993 and Edwards in Scodel.

66 Hall, 2010, 16–17 makes this point in relation to tragedy.

67 Goldhill, 1991, 176 ff.; Burke, 1978, 201–202; T. Eagleton, 178–188 in Hirschop and Shepherd. A.T. Edwards in Scodel comes close to this, while Seeberg in Griffiths, 6 sees comedy in this role.

68 For *isegoria* and *parrhesia*, Herod. 5.78; Halliwell, 1991b, 48; Rosenbloom in Fontaine and Scafuro, 202. For the relation to comedy, Henderson in Boedecker and Raaflaub, 255–260 and Monoson, 2000, 165 ff. in relation to Plato.

69 For Aristophanes championing minority viewpoints in order to attack the elite, Henderson in Sommerstein et al., 314, while Hall in Easterling, 93–126 sees tragedy as more democratic than Athens itself. For a contrary view, which sees the "insolent slave," Cario reduced to his place, Olson, 1989, 193–199.

70 As Reckford, 1987, 286. For Platter, 1993, 206 Bakhtin's "problem with Aristophanic comedy" is "It is too closely associated with the life of the city."

city, it seems to be, as in the *Acharnians*, only to remind us of how important the city is. It is not an approach that seems likely to relieve pressures struggling against repression.

The result is a puzzle. It is difficult to view Old Comedy in the same light as carnival, while, on the other hand, it is difficult to deny that many aspects of Athenian comedy deliberately invert civic values. The dilemma, however, may arise yet again from the tendency to look at comedy in isolation. If instead we view comedy and tragedy together, it is easier to see how Aristophanes can both subvert the city and support it. For in looking more closely, we see that what comedy turns upside down is not the world of fifth-century Athens, but rather the world of the tragedians, the men whose job it was, ostensibly, to instruct the Athenians in how to be citizens (*Frogs* 1054–1055).[71]

When the low triumph over the great in Aristophanes, what is targeted is not Athens's official democratic ethos, which is reinforced rather than inverted by the triumph, but the hierarchical vision of society presented in tragedy, which also remained quite relevant to Athens.[72] As the *Knights*' presentation of Cleon makes clear, the sausage seller, an extreme version of the usual Aristophanic hero (though not heroine), is a caricature of Athenian political reality, not an inversion of it. And as the institution of ostracism implies, the comic hero's un-tragic antagonism to the high and mighty renders the hero not less, but more ideally Athenian. Litigious, refusing to be awed by position or ceremony, addicted to speeches, innovations, and festivals, hauling down the great and championing himself, the comic hero (as is made clear in tragic parody) is the "upside-down" version of the tragic hero—and the very model of a Themistoclean Athenian.[73]

Aristophanes' portraits of women as sex-crazed and wine-guzzling, of barbarians as thick-witted, of Sophists as slippery, of rulers as bombastic and effeminate, and of oracle-mongers as self-interested and manipulative, caricature rather than invert ordinary Athenian life. What these portraits invert are

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71 For a more nuanced view of this "instruction" see Chapter Seven, section three.

72 Given Athens's *de facto* rule by the elite, the subversion of tragedy has political implications as Carter, 2007, 100–103; Henderson in Sommerstein et al, for comedy's attack on the elite reinforcing popular sovereignty; *contra* A.T. Edwards in Scodel. Even Dionysus, who served "under Cleisthenes" at Arginusae (*Frogs* 48–50) and under Phormio in Eupolis' *Commanders*, has an ordinary Athenian identity in comedy.

73 See Konstan, 1995, 21 for cunning self-interest as admirable. Herodotus emphasizes Themistocles' "trickster" attributes: a quick wit, a healthy self-interest, and a flexible sense of loyalty, as also in the story at *Republic* 330a; Sutton, 1993, 35 describes the comic hero in these terms.

not people as they might be met on the street, but rather the noble women, the foreign kings, the heroic leaders, and the wise sages and prophets of tragedy. Moreover, when Aristophanes inverts the relations of gods and men, it is the gods of tragedy—Zeus the king, Hermes the messenger, Prometheus the rebel—not the gods of ordinary experience that he refers to.[74] Even in the case of real Athenians, the humor of Lamachus or Paphlagon's overthrow stems from Aristophanes' portraying them as Homeric or tragic heroes ("O hero Lamachus!" *Acharn.* 575; *Knights* 1237 ff.) rather than as the impoverished (in the case of Lamachus) and less than heroic figures they actually were.[75] The triumphant declaration of independence from the *polis* found in *Acharnians*, of independence from the gods found in *Birds*, and of independence from Zeus' will found in *Wealth* turn the limitations on human life upside down. More directly, what they turn upside down is the very specific limitations brought out in Athenian tragedy.

The "upside-down" relation of comedy to tragedy also shows us another way in which the point of Aristophanes' comedy is the comedy itself. By inverting tragedy rather than the contemporary world, Aristophanes strikes a blow for contingency. Carnival, if it is ubiquitous, is also everywhere temporary. Between the upside-down world it presents and the right-side-up world it inverts, there is no doubt that the right-side-up is the real one. This is not the case with Aristophanes. Aristophanes inverts the world of tragedy in the *Birds* or the *Wealth* by bringing the gods to their knees. In so doing he also reminds us that the gods of tragedy, whom he invokes, are every bit as *ex machina* as his own. The tragic parody of the *Knights* points out that the fall of Oedipus, Heracles, or Ajax is no more inevitable than Paphlagon's. And when Euripides' in-law confronts the ultimate threat of the female, the confrontation reminds us that the Euripidean heroines referred to are just as much theatrical creations as he is.

Aristophanes clearly does not invert tragedy rather than ordinary life as a way to avoid reality. As we have seen, the aristocratic values of tragedy remained

74 See Mastronarde, 2010, 157–158 on the tragic gods as Homeric and Panhellenic; Mikalson, 1991, 204–207: "in general terms, the gods of literature are more hostile, less beneficent, and less forgiving than those of popular religion" (206). For the similarity to Aristophanes' gods, see Chapter Six, and for a contrary view, Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003 and in Pelling, 161–186.

75 In Plutarch (*Nicias* 15. 1; *Alcib.* 21) he is too poor to buy his own boots; by the time of the *Acharnians* he had accompanied Pericles to the Black Sea (Plutarch, *Pericles* 20) and in the next year would lose ten ships there. See Olson, *Acharn*, 149–150; Storey, 2003, 336 sees him as a newcomer as *Acharn.* 661; Halliwell, 330–331 and Slater, 408, both in Sommerstein et al., as not an obvious target.

very much relevant to contemporary Athens, while his interest in dressing women up like men and men up like women has as much to do with the conventions of ordinary life as it does with the conventions of the theater. Nonetheless, given the opportunity, Aristophanes employs an inversion of tragedy, whether of tragic oracles, a heroic challenge to the gods, or of a voyage to the underworld, as the vehicle for his plays. In so doing he points out that the discontinuity and irrationality of comedy are just as real as the intensity of tragedy. As we will see again in Chapter Seven, the intensity of tragedy can make us forget that there are other ways to see the world. Aristophanes reminds us that while the topics that the tragic poet deals with may be absolute, the poet is still a human being, whose vision has no more, and no less, validity than Aristophanes' own.

CHAPTER 6

Persians, *Peace*, and *Birds*: God and Man in Wartime

> A man late for an important meeting in the city was at his wit's end looking for a parking space. Finally, in desperation, he turned to God, and promised that if he found a space he would be devout forever after. Just at that moment a space opened up directly in front of his destination. The man took it, looked up to Heaven, and said, "Never mind, I found one."

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The three plays we consider here, *Peace*, *Birds*, and *Persians*, share a backdrop of war, a backdrop that tragedy inherited from epic and used to explore the theme of violence.[1] The three also all raise issues of human self-determination, and as such share epic's interest in the gods' involvement in human warfare. But while the *Peace* and the *Birds* between them bring no less than eleven separate divinities on stage, the plays, like the joke above, focus on human rather than divine agency. As we will see, the opposite is the case in the *Persians*.

Since Athens spent most of the fifth century at war, it is not surprising that much of Greek drama deals with the topic. War, as it is a time when humans are both most vulnerable and most powerful, also seems a natural topic in considering our relation to the divine. As humans are vulnerable, as in the opening of the *Seven Against Thebes*, it is a time to call upon the gods. But as warriors, like Ajax or the heroes of the *Iliad*, feel their strength, it is also an occasion when humans may challenge the gods. And, as in Clytemnestra's description of the cries of victory and defeat at Troy (*Agam*. 320ff.) or in the ominous conversation between Athena and Poseidon that opens the *Trojan Women*, war most closely juxtaposes the two conditions, moving mortals from one to the other in the space of a day.[2] As we would expect, tragedy is most

1 Snyder, 1991, 33. In addition to Troy, tragedy uses Polyneices' attack on Thebes, as in *Seven Against Thebes, Antigone*, *Suppliant Women* etc. as a way to explore war.

2 Hall, 2010, 106–107 and see 104–110 for the crucial place of war in tragedy.

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concerned with the move from power to vulnerability, and comedy the reverse, a tendency amply illustrated by the three plays considered here.

As we have seen in looking at oracles, in Greek tragedy it is largely the fallibility of human understanding that divides the human from the divine, a pattern that, as Revermann points out, is later adopted by Menander. In comedy, in contrast, the intention of the gods is perfectly intelligible and the gods serve as "other" not to human understanding but to the human will.[3] In the *Peace*, Zeus gives humans over to War because he is sick of our quarrelling; in *Wealth*, he grudges human prosperity—that is, he is motivated by *phthonos*; and in the *Birds*, he wants to maintain his supremacy. The problem here is not how to comprehend the divine will, but how to overcome it.[4]

In tragedy the figure of Zeus was so charged that he was not even brought onstage. As in *Agamemnon*'s references to "some Apollo or Pan or Zeus" (55–56) or "Zeus, whoever he is" (160), the genre also tends to remain rather fuzzy about the divine origin of events. In contrast, comedy highlights the hostility of Zeus, and his influence extends the effect.[5] Even in *Clouds*, where gods seem to act to the benefit of human beings, the gods in question, the Clouds, begin the play as purely human inventions. It is only after the *parabasis*, when the Clouds have identified themselves with the Olympian gods, and first of all with the great "high-ruling *tyrannos* of the gods, Zeus" (563–565), that the "benefit" turns out to consist, in tragic fashion, not in steering Strepsiades toward the right path, but in ensuring that he encounters disaster when he takes the wrong one.

In general, however, even when gods favor human beings in Aristophanic comedy, it is the humans rather than the gods who are effective.[6] Amphitheos ("God-on-both-sides") has to beg traveling money from the Athenian Assembly (*Acharn.* 46–54). Hermes' aid to Trugaios consists merely (when persuaded by a bribe) in not yelling for Zeus (*Peace* 376–425), while in *Wealth* his announce-

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3 Revermann, 275–287.

4 As Might puts it for tragedy (*Prometheus Bound*, 50): "Only Zeus is free"—exactly the position the comic hero aspires to. Whitman, 1964, 151: "Comic fantasy regularly aspires to the position of a god, and defines that position in terms of personal satisfaction and freedom from the restraints of law and authority"; in contrast, Hall, 2010, 300: "the only generalization that can safely be made applies to all Greek tragedy, even to Euripides' more outrageous plays: divine will is always, eventually, done." For modern comic versions of God see "Oh God," "Bruce Almighty," "The Invention of Lying," or Damon and Affleck's "Dogma."

5 Revermann in Revermann, 281–282.

6 Scullion in Fontaine and Scafuro, 345–346: "It has often been observed that though the gods are very frequently mentioned in Aristophanes, they rarely play a very prominent or essential role in the working out of the comic plot"; Rothfield, 1999, xxxiii.

ment of Zeus' destroying will (1107–1108) gives way immediately to begging for food or a place in the household (1118–1147). The paradigmatic human-favoring god, Prometheus, appears in *Birds* with a parasol, attempting to hide from Zeus (1493–1512), while in the first half of *Frogs* Dionysus is regularly shown up by his human slave, Xanthias. Although *Lysistrata* seems to have a reference to Lysimache, the priestess of Athena Polias, the heroine's success, even in enforcing the women's solemn oath, is purely human, and in *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Euripides' violation of the sacred festival, far from being punished, finally results in his getting what he wanted all along, an agreement that the women not destroy him (81–89, 181–187, 1160–1170).[7] If Aristophanes differs from Sophocles, it seems to be less because he sees the divine will as beneficent than because he refuses to take the divine will seriously.

Peace and *Birds* also reflect a feature of comedy that we observed in Chapter Five, the tendency of comedy to invert the gods of tragedy rather than those of ordinary life. As one would expect, the gods an Athenian encountered in ordinary life, as in the hero cults or Orphism, were seen, primarily, as beneficent.[8] Aeschylus' savage-minded *daimon* (*Persians* 911), after all, is not the sort of divinity one prays to when the olive vat is missing. Here, as we will see, the inversion of the tragic gods allows Aristophanes to highlight as well an essential feature of tragedy, the necessity that it associates with the divine. And while the relation between the gods of drama and those of ordinary life is too complex a topic to consider here, it seems likely that comedy's focus on the former was one element that allowed for its astonishing irreverence.[9]

Comic irreverence seems to have relied on comedy's pairing with tragedy in another way as well. Aristophanes' disrespect toward the gods is blatant, including, for example, Peisetairos' threat in *Birds* to rape Iris (three times running), the picture of Hermes as an avaricious lackey in *Peace* and *Wealth*

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7 See Henderson, *Lysistrata*, xxxv for Lysistrata's initiatives as "undertaken by women in their ordinary capacities as citizens" and xxxviii–xli and 1980, 187–189 for Lysimache.

8 See Parker in Pelling, 1997, 143–160 and Mikalson, 1991, 18 for the difference and 208 for the same concerning divination; C. Segal, 1995, 5 for Sophocles' gods as remote, dangerous, awesome; Jones, 1962, 172 on the gods of tragedy as also beneficent. In contrast Parker in Pelling 1997, sees the gods of tragedy as like those of civic religion and, 144, the gods of comedy as beneficent. Graf in McDonald and Walton, 69 argues that "to separate myth and cult, as Varro did and as some modern scholars do, sanitizes what should not be sanitized." I agree that comedy's portrayal of the gods is meant to reflect on the actual religious life of the audience, but would add that this is its actual religious life as filtered through tragedy, which is by no means hermetically sealed from ordinary religious belief.

9 Revermann in Revermann, 275–290.

and of Poseidon as a self-satisfied functionary in *Birds*, as well as multiple depictions of human beings challenging the authority of Zeus and prospering because of it. Nonetheless, despite their outrageousness, these scenes are not generally taken as impious—presumably because we understand that they are not meant to be definitive.[10] Just as the comic depictions of gods on vases is meant to be seen against their more "serious" depictions (as seen in Chapter One), Athenian comedy explored, and was understood to explore, only one side of the human relation to the divine. It served as an occasion of license, when the urge to transgress even the most solemn boundaries (or rather, perhaps, to transgress these in particular) could be indulged. Tragedy depicted the divine as a greater whole, encountered by the human as necessity, but which also gives the human its meaning.[11] Comedy presented its audience with the opposite picture, of the divine as an oppressive and meddlesome appendage to human life—the view that created the urge to transgress in the first place.

This is not meant to imply that comedy is mere wish fulfillment. As we saw in looking at *Knights*, just as tragedy is not merely a cautionary tale, comedy is not merely a fantasy of power.[12] As the *Oresteia*, the *Bacchae*, the *Ajax*, and

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10 If anything, Aristophanes is usually seen as conservative and opposed to new, sophistic, antireligious tendencies. See Long, 1986, 41–47 for Aristophanes' ridicule of the gods as innocuous; McLeish, 1980, 58–59, 64 answering charges that he is "antireligious" (58); MacDowell, 1995, 220–221: "The gods, like other powerful people [*sic*], were expected to accept on that occasion mockery which they might not tolerate at other times"; Dover, 1972, 31–33; Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003, 176–177; Scullion in Fontaine and Scafuro; D. Walsh, 2009, 156–164, 281–287 on visual burlesques as coping, sometimes enviously, and sometimes subversively, with divine power; Mitchell, 2009, 130–149 on the license allowed the visual arts. In contrast see Dunbar, *Birds*, 11 for qualms; Nilsson: "nobody who believes in gods can treat them as Aristophanes treats them" (as Graf in McDonald and Walton, 66, and see 66–67 for less stern views).

11 Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 27–28: "The particular domain of tragedy lies in this border zone where human actions hinge on divine powers and where their true meaning, unsuspected by even those who initiated them and take responsibility for them, is only revealed when it becomes a part of an order that is beyond man and escapes him"; Foley, 2001, 15: "The overdetermined world of tragedy intensifies the audience's sense that making ethical choices involves the unknowable and the uncontrollable both within and outside the self; yet at the same time the divine forces offer the hope of making some kind of larger sense out of human plans and errors"; Sourvinou-Inwood in Osborne and Hornblower, 289: "Such myths, then, articulate the tension between perceived reality and order as established in human society and a deeper unknowable reality that lies beyond the limits of human rationality" and 1989, 147–152.

12 See Easterling in Easterling and Knox, 53 for earlier views of Sophocles' attempt "to justify the ways of god to man," with a useful reminder that reactions against this position can

the *Oedipus Tyrannos* have illustrated, tragedy, which tends to explore the relation of the human to the divine as a relation of necessity, views this necessity in a myriad of ways and with deep attention to its complexity. Similarly, Aristophanes, who sees the divine as largely defined by the human, is as interested in the fissures and self-contradictions of such a view as he is in the freedom it implies.

1 The *Persians*: War, Empire, and the Divine

Aeschylus' *Persians* is saturated with the divine, although it contains no gods as characters. This is not as unusual as it might seem. Although comedy often does not deal with the gods, when it does it brings them onstage. The large amount of mythological comedies that continued to be written in Athens, even in the fifth century, seem largely to have used gods, and even Zeus, as characters. In Sicily, Epicharmus' *Pyrrha and Prometheus* and *Marriage of Hebe* included gods, as did Cratinus' transfer of the mythological into the political in plays such as the *Dionysalexandros* and the *Nemesis*. Cratinus' *Wealth-gods* employed a chorus of Titans; Eupolis' *Commanders* (fr. 274), Archippus' *Shipwrecked Dionysus* (otherwise attributed to Aristophanes), Aristomenes' *Tradesman Dionysus*, and later Eubulus' *Semele* included Dionysus (fr. 93), while Platon's *Long Night*, Sannyrion's *Danae*, and Antiphanes' *Ganymede* all included Zeus himself. Of the eleven extant plays of Aristophanes, the three that concern the gods directly, the *Peace*, the *Birds*, and the *Wealth*, are amply populated with divine characters; the *Clouds* dramatizes Socrates' atheism by employing a chorus of aspiring divinities; and the *Frogs* stars Dionysus with a supporting role by Pluto (and presumably a walk-on for Persephone).[13] In contrast, the gods of tragedy are usually unseen. The *Eumenides* (together with the *Prometheus Bound*, if it is by Aeschylus) is the only Aeschylean play that has divine characters. Athena in the *Ajax* is the only divine character in Sophocles' extant plays, although the hero Heracles appears in the *Philoctetes*.[14] Tragedy may seem to be peopled by

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go too far. For the relation of tragedy and ritual see Easterling, 1988 and Friedrich in Silk, 257–283. Taplin's antiritual view, 1978, 161–162 ignores his own point that tragedy can use ritual, although it is not ritual itself, vs. Versnel, 1990; Seaford, 1994; Cartledge in Easterling, 1997, 3–35. See C. Segal in Silk, 149–172 on tragic closure as a catharsis, like ritual lament, and Easterling's response that the release is in witnessing the ritual, not in the ritual itself.

13 On Persephone, Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 295. The *Acharnians*' "divine" Amphitheos could also be included.

14 Mastronarde, 2010, 174–195; Graf in McDonald and Walton, 65–66; Budelmann, 2000, 136–

gods, but this is due largely to the *Eumenides* and *Prometheus* alongside Euripides, and Euripides' use of divine characters often seems designed precisely to bring assumptions about the divine into question.

Why tragedy might avoid bringing gods onstage becomes apparent in looking at comedy. As we will see, the gods of the comic stage are funny largely because they look very much like the human beings.[15] Tragedy goes out of its way to avoid this. Gods appear onstage in Euripides most often in the prologue, when the god has no contact with the human, or in the epilogue, when a rather cynical view of the god is often already in place. This is true even in the *Bacchae*, where Dionysus is disguised as a human during the action of the play.[16] Athena, in the *Ajax*, is explicitly invisible to Odysseus, and some have argued to the audience as well (14–17), while Hippolytus (1391–1393) senses Artemis' presence by her fragrance rather than by sight.[17] In the *Eumenides* the problem is avoided by making special provisions. Here, as we have seen, the first two plays of the trilogy, which contain no divine characters, prepare the audience for the gods, while in the *Eumenides* itself (as in the *Prometheus Bound*) the discrepancy is minimized because the vast majority of the characters are divine.

In contrast, Aristophanes places his gods cheek by jowl with humans. The humor that results takes Xenophanes' point that Ethiopians make their gods snub-nosed and black and Thracians make theirs red-haired and blue-eyed even further, attributing to the gods not only a human nature, but human convention as well. Aristophanes moves from general Greek custom, as in the *Birds*' barbarian god who cannot fasten his *himation* properly (1567–1569), to Athenian minutiae. Thus his Pluto offers free meals at the *prytaneum* (*Frogs* 761–764), the Clouds take their shape from whatever Athenian happens to be passing by (*Clouds* 348 ff.), and in the *Birds* the goddess Basileia is in charge of Zeus' thunderbolt and everything else of importance to the divine: "wisdom, good order, moderation, dockyards, mudslinging, paymasters and three-obolses" (1538–1541, following Sommerstein). In this way onstage divinities suit Aristophanes for exactly the reason that they are problematic in tragedy—because they illustrate how closely we have made the gods reflect ourselves.

137; Pucci, 1994, 17 on the scenes' "marginality" and reference to epic, which "does not invite its reader to imagine the shape and the form of the divine bodies and does not claim to describe them in their visible appearance."

15 D. Walsh, 2009, 287 on burlesque vases remodeling "the heroic and divine into less-than-perfect human personalities"; Taplin in Silk, 194: "in comedy the gods are all too human, in tragedy all too unhuman."

16 Mastronarde, 2010, 174–195.

17 For Athena as not visible to the audience in *Ajax* see Kitto, 1939, 151; Gellie, 1972, 5.

The *Persians* takes the opposite approach. In contrast to Aristophanes' onstage gods, the play creates a deliberately amorphous sense of the divine, and does so largely through a feature nearly unique to the play, the tendency to avoid even the names of the Greek gods. In so doing, Aeschylus creates a sense of universal necessity in a play that, uniquely, does not employ the usual mythic filter of tragedy.

Aeschylus' treatment of the divine also addresses a central controversy about the play. The events treated in the *Persians*, such as the forced depopulation and sacking of Athens and the destruction of the temples on the Acropolis (located immediately behind the spectators), left little room for sympathy with the Persians, while the Persians' vast superiority in numbers made the Greek victory a matter of particular pride. As it is difficult to see how Aeschylus could create any emotional connection between an Athenian audience and Xerxes, the Persian king, there seems to be, to follow Aristotle's account (*Poetics* 1453a5), neither pity, as for undeserved misfortune, or fear, as for the misfortune of one like us.[18] The play thus seems to depict a necessity that the audience would not apply to themselves. In this light it seems doubtful whether the *Persians* is really a tragedy at all.[19]

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18 Harrison, 2000b, 21 sees even Hall affected by 19th century views which saw the play as "mere xenophobic self-congratulation" and see Hall, 2006, 207–208 in reply; Lattimore, 1947; Gagarin, 1976, 33–36; Harrison, 2000b, 103–115; Snyder, 1991, 37; Podlecki, 1966a, 22–23; Georges, 1994, 86–90: "[The Persian elders] cannot comprehend the meaning of chastisements imposed by god because barbarians are uncomprehending by nature" (88); Kantzios, 2004 sees Greece as politically, not, personally, superior; Avery, 1963, 173: "On the one hand, Aeschylus wanted to glorify the Greek victory over the Persians. On the other, he, and his contemporaries, in 472 were only too aware of the Persians' power and their potential for aggression."

19 See Garvie, *Persae*, xvi–xl; Broadhead, *Persae*, xv–xxxii: "In form the *Persae* is certainly a tragedy, but in the opinion of many scholars its subject matter and the spirit in which it has been handled remove it from the category of genuine tragedy" (xv) with references. He concludes that, as its force extends beyond merely Athens, it is tragic (xvi); Rosenbloom, 2006, 11: "The central interpretive problem of the play is whether it is a tragedy in the canonical sense—an enactment that can arouse sympathetic emotions such as pity and fear in the audience—or a depiction of Persian defeat and lament that celebrates Greek military and cultural superiority, including Schadenfreude at the spectacle of Persian pain"; he concludes, 142: "Because it recognizes the humanity of Xerxes' delusion, the tragedy and the laws it instantiates apply to mortals rather than merely to barbarians." In contrast Craig, 1924; Georges, 1995, 85–113; Harrison, 2000b, 110–111 on a modern misreading of sympathy for the Persians based on assumptions about the general nature of tragedy, against which Goldhill, 2001, 10; Lloyd in Lloyd, 2006, 2–8 for a summary of views.

The complaint that the *Persians* is not tragic assumes a universality in tragedy that sets it in immediate opposition to Old Comedy, which wore its Athenocentrism on its sleeve. The assumption, I believe, is justified, and the *Persians* is not an exception to the rule: Aeschylus, by invoking anonymous divine forces rather than specific Greek deities, universalizes Xerxes' defeat and so enables his audience to sympathize with the Persians.[20] Only in Darius' central speeches, with their descriptions of *hybris* and *atē*, is Zeus associated with the play's amorphous sense of the divine. Aeschylus thus suggests, just before Xerxes enters, the audience's vulnerability to the forces that destroyed the Persian king.

The *Persians* is the only extant tragedy that deals with contemporary events and the only one that contains no Greek characters. As such it inherently reorients its audience and, to this extent, implies a universalizing element.[21] Although the play does not conceal its obviously Greek focus, as in (most strikingly to modern ears) the characters' tendency to refer to themselves as "barbarian," Aeschylus also introduces Persian idioms that move the audience out of their strictly Greek framework.[22] A tendency to generalize the Greek forces appears in the references to "Hellenes" rather than "Athenians" at Salamis, even in regard to Themistocles' messenger (336, 351, 355, 362, etc.), and even a small

20 Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 215. References to "[shrines] of your fatherland's gods" (*theon patroon, Persians* 404), to Apis as an "Egyptian god" (Herod. 3.64) or to Apollo as "god of the Greeks" (Herod. 1.87 etc.) make it clear that Aeschylus and Herodotus did distinguish "Greek" and "foreign" gods. For the question Rudhart, 172–178 and Harrison, 130–132, both in Harrison, 2002; Harrison, 2000a, 208–222; Lattimore, 1939; Hall, 1989, 5, 86–93, 143–154; Thomas, 2000, 181–182, 274–282.

21 For this universal side to the play Thalmann, 1980, 281–282; Hall, *Persians*, 17 for a somewhat sarcastic account of others; Griffith in Lloyd, 101–102 with other views and Goldhill, 1988, 193 n. 35: "If sympathy for others is part of the 'tragic experience,' it is none the less part of what I see as Aeschylus' boldness in this play to place an audience in the position of discovering tragic sympathy for such an 'other' as the Persian invaders." Taplin in Cairns, 2006, 1–10 suggests the play may not have been intended only for Athens.

22 As "Ionians" for Greeks (178, 563, 950–951, 1011, 1025 etc.), "Darian," an approximation of the Persian form, for Darius (651, 671), "ballen" for "king" (656); Hall, *Persians*, 154; Headlam, 1900, 108 for the Ionic meter; Broadhead, *Persae*, xxx–ii; Clifton, 1963, 116 for the "oriental tone" overall. For an actual Persian reference to Greeks as "Ionians" see the scholiast on *Acharnians* 104; Herodotus 7.9.1. See Hall, *Persians*, 123 for archaeological confirmation, 20, 113 and 2010, 111 for dance, music, and (22–23) diction reflecting the same tendency. The redirection also appears in omitting the names of Greek generals, in contrast to the Persians; see Goldhill, 1988, 189 for an anonymous, collective and communal Greek spirit; Euben, 1986b, 368. As Hall, 5–6, the issue is the Greek view of the "Persian," not an account of Persia for its own sake.

detail, like the description of arrows falling on the Persian forces, rather than being shot by the Greeks (459–461), points us to the Persians', and in particular to Xerxes', point of view.[23]

The gods are used in this way as well. The many references to forces of nature, such as the sun, sea, rivers, and earth, as animate and even divine accords with a view of Persian religion also reflected in Herodotus (1.131).[24] Far more obvious, however, is the play's avoidance of the Greek gods. In Herodotus' account of the Persian War, the Athenians point to common blood, common language, and common gods as the basic elements of their common Greekness (Herod. 8.144).[25] A similar identification occurs in the *Suppliant Women*, where the chorus points to their relation to the Greek gods as proof that they are Greek, and not, as they seem, barbarians (277–326). In the *Persians*, the same association is used in reverse, downplaying the audience's necessarily Greek perspective by avoiding the names of the gods altogether.

Divine force in the *Persians* tends to be anonymous. In Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, gods are named, by a rough count, nearly eighty times, including twenty-one references to Zeus alone. In his *Suppliant Women*, the gods are named ninety-five times. In contrast, Greek gods are named only thirteen times in the *Persians*, and of these, the references to Ares at 1.85 and Zeus at 1.271 are ambiguous and the mention of Pan (449) merely descriptive.[26] The account of Salamis, which contains the play's only reference to Athena, is telling:

23 Hall, *Persians*, 142; particularly pointed as the bow characterizes Persia. For an Athenian focus (as in the Messenger's "Alas, how I groan remembering Athens" 285) balanced against a Panhellenic one, Hall, *Persians*, 11–12 vs. Lattimore, 1943, 90–93; Rosenbloom in Carter, 361–364 for Athens standing in for Hellas.

24 As the undefiled sea (578), the sacred river (497), the well-meaning waters (487), the lord Sun (232), Earth and Sky (499) and Earth personified (220, 524, 549, 618, 629, 683). It is unlikely that Aeschylus intends a reference to Zoroastrianism, or thought in these terms; Herodotus sees the Persians worshiping elements in nature rather than gods in human form, but still describes them calling the circle of the heaven Zeus (1.131); Hall, *Persians*, 15 with sources.

25 For the close relation of Herodotus to the *Persians* Lattimore, 1943, 92–93; Michelini, 1982, 75; Kirk, 1955; Lazenby, 1988; Goldhill, 1988; Harrison, 2000b, 44–48. Although, as Harrison, 2002, 130; Hall, 2010, 110, 158–159, Herodotus refers to shared ritual practices, these also implied the named Greek gods.

26 Winnington-Ingram, 1973 does not include l. 271 and sees Athena as deliberately omitted: "Aeschylus is going to interpret the campaign, not in terms of Athena saving her city, but of Zeus maintaining a moral order in the world" (211). Otherwise Hermes, king of those below (629), Phoebus (205), Pallas (347), Poseidon (749–750), Ares (950–954) and Zeus (532–536, 739–740, 762, 827, 915) are named.

> Do we seem to you to have fallen short in the battle?
> Rather some *daimon* thus destroyed the army,
> loading the scales with a not equally inclining fortune.
> The gods save the city of the goddess Pallas.
>
> 344–347

Rather than identifying Athena as the savior of Athens, as in the mural of the Battle of Marathon on the Stoa Poikile (Pausanias 1.15.4), here anonymous "gods" save the city, and "some *daimon*" turns the tide of battle. This is the norm in *Persians*, where the frequent references to an anonymous "god" (164, 454, 480, 495, 514, etc.) or "gods" (216, 229, 283, 347, 362, 373, 454, 495, 604, 622, 634) is punctuated at critical moments with a reference to the *daimon* (345, 354, 472, 515, 724, 725, 845, 911, 921, etc.)—a divine force that belongs to no particular culture.[27]

This ambiguity allows Aeschylus to explore the human relation to the divine through Xerxes. Had the gods of the play been identified with the usual Greek pantheon, as in the *Suppliant Women*, it would be difficult for an Athenian not to take Xerxes as simply their enemy. And while it may seem normal for Persians not to use Greek names for the gods, the later occasions when the gods are named demonstrate that Aeschylus is not bothered by the discrepancy.[28] In their entry song, however, the chorus links Xerxes to unnamed deities to stress the peril of his position, asking, in one of two central descriptions of the divine: "The wit-tricking deception of the god / what mortal man can avoid?" (93–94).[29] Although Xerxes is an *isotheos phos*, a "man like the gods" (80, and see 856), and though he may (in Persian eyes) become divine, he is not divine yet.[30]

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27 Clifton, 1963, 115–116; Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 213 for impersonal deities in Homer and Herodotus. Aeschylus thus avoids the effect, on Aeneas' shield, of Roman vs. barbarian gods (*Aeneid* 8.695–706), a distinction Aristophanes delights in (*Peace* 409–413, *Birds* 1565 ff., *Seasons*; Rusten, 2011, 322).

28 See Burkert, 1985b, 121–132 for the usual practice of using the names of Greek gods for foreign deities.

29 The references follow opening anapests that, extraordinarily, make no reference to the gods, as Hall, *Persians*, 16: "it is strange that the lengthy parodos hardly names any gods at all"; Else, 1977: "The *Persians* has no prologue, and neither its parodos nor the following ode contains a prayer to any god. But the parodos expresses fear and apprehension in ample measure: fear of what the gods may do or may have done." Perhaps to abstract her as well, Aeschylus also never names Atossa, calling her "Queen" and "mother" throughout (155, 215, 173, 623).

30 Rosenmeyer, 1982, 262; Rosenbloom, 2006, 43–44 for views of Xerxes as a god; Hall, *Persians*, 121; Gow, 1928 for Persian kings considered gods only after the conclusion of a suc-

The song thus ends on an ominous note: "You [the Queen] are of the god of the Persians the bedfellow, and of a god the mother / unless some ancient *daimon* has turned now against the army" (157–158).

In this setting, Darius' speeches, which join the unnamed *daimon* of the play with Zeus, also prepare the way for a divine necessity that governs both Xerxes and the Athenians. This is not, however, how the relation is often seen. Scholars have taken the introduction of Zeus as replacing a primitive Persian sense of the *daimon* with a more sophisticated (Greek) sense of divine will, completed by Darius' new understanding that the *daimon* is a reflection of human guilt or innocence.[31] Under this reading the immediate return of the Queen, the chorus, and Xerxes to the idea of the malevolent *daimon* (845, 911, 921, 942, 1005) demonstrates their inability to perceive the divine law apparent to the more sophisticated (Greek) audience.

Rather than opposing Zeus and the Greek gods to the *daimon*, however, Aeschylus links them together. In Darius' first mention of Zeus, this is brought out through parallel phrasing:

> Darius: And [Xerxes] accomplished this, to close up the great Bosporus?
> Queen: So it was. Perhaps some one of the *daimones* worked with (*sunepsato*) his plan.
> Darius: Alas, some great *daimon* came indeed, to distort his thought.
>
> 723–725

> Darius: Against my son
> Zeus has hurled the completion of the prophecies. I had thought, perhaps,
> in some distant time the gods would fulfill these things.
> But whenever one hastens himself, the god works alongside (*sunaptetai*).
>
> 739–741

cessful life. Xerxes is also linked to the gods through his epithet, *thourios* (74, 718, 754), used of Ares in Homer, as Hall, *Persians* 114. As "shepherd" (75, 241) he recalls the kings of the *Iliad*, "shepherds of the people" (1.263, 2.86, 2.244, 4.296 etc.) while for *proskynesis* see Hall, *Persians*, 119–120; Sider, 1983, 188–191.

31 Winnington-Ingram, 1973, esp. 217 and 1983, 14; Georges, 1994, 76–114; and for a wider distinction Dodds, 1951, 39: "What to the partial vision of the living appears as the act of a fiend, is perceived by the wider insight of the dead to be an aspect of cosmic justice"; for a criticism Mitsis in Pucci, 1988. For a contrary argument, linking the *daimones* and Zeus, Rosenmeyer, 1982, 261–263; for a link to "*daimon* is character" (Heraclitus 54) Rosenbloom, 2006, 99; Rosenmeyer, 1982, 225 for the connection to tragedy.

The connection is then made even more directly in Darius' third speech, where Greek gods and *daimones* are linked (807–812) and their association with *hybris* and *atē* (821–822) culminates in Darius' final mention of Zeus: "Zeus, it is (*toi*), the chastiser of those who think too high, / who stands over them, a harsh assessor" (827–828).

Darius' conjunction of Zeus and the *daimon* holds the center of the play. It also points to its critical theme. While no other Greek god is named more than twice, Zeus is mentioned six times (271, 532, 739–740, 762, 827, 915), three of which occur, once each, in Darius' three central speeches.[32] The first and last, as we have seen, describe the oracle that foretold the present calamity (739–740) and the punishment Zeus ordains for arrogance (827–828), themes the audience might well expect. In his central speech, however, Darius' reference to Zeus is of a very different kind. Here he declares that a catastrophe like the present one has not occurred "since Zeus the king (*anax*) provided this honor (*timē*) / that one man should command all of sheep-rearing Asia / holding the ruling scepter" (761–763).

The statement is startling, particularly in its implications for Athenian expansion into Persia. Nor can it be taken merely as special pleading on Darius' part. Despite the early references to Marathon (236–245, 475, possibly 675), the chorus's praise of Darius (647–648, 652–655, 662, 852 ff.) and the contrast drawn between his moderation and Xerxes' *hybris* establish him as a figure of wisdom.[33] Aeschylus even normalizes Darius' ambiguous position between the divine and the mortal with his references to Greek heroes such as Ajax (307, 368, 596) and Cychreus (570), also mortals elevated after death.[34] We must therefore take Darius' declaration that Zeus himself gave the Great King sovereignty

32 Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 211: "Zeus belongs particularly to the Darius-scene and its immediate environment"; Michelini, 1982, 74 on Darius as the "crowning event"; Rosenbloom, 2006, 103 as a "synoptic moment."

33 Michelini, 1982, 123–124 on Darius' "impersonal" style giving validity; in contrast, Kantzios, 2004, 13 n. 36 on the irony of "Remember Athens" (l. 824) in light of the messenger at 285; Georges, 1994, 109–111 on a "double image" (110), "laundered" (82) but unable to understand the true source of Xerxes' transgression.

34 Melchinger, 1979, 23 and *contra* Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 15 n. 63. For the tradition, Hesiod, *WD* 121–126, 140–142 on the golden and silver ages. For Darius as happy in the Herodotean sense of dying in full prosperity, Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 214–215 and on his divinity Kantzios, 2004, 9–10; Broadhead, *Persae*, 69; Michelini, 1982, 146 for Darius, although a "Sousa-born god" (146), as mortal, so rising from the dead. Here, as throughout, Hall's point (*Persians*, 5–6), that the play represents Greek ideas about Persian culture, not Persian culture directly, is important.

over Asia as seriously as the statements that frame it, that Zeus watches out for *hybris* and that he brought on Xerxes' fall.[35]

Darius' declaration, which suggests that Asia is as independent of Greece as Greece is of Asia, has been prepared by Atossa's dream of the Greek and barbarian women who cannot be yoked together (176–199). It has also been foreshadowed by the complementary identifications, running throughout the play, of the land with Persia and the sea with Greece, highlighted by the chorus's fear in seeing the Persians, meant to fight on land, venturing onto the sea (101–116).[36] As it is explicitly the land, "sheep-rearing Asia," that Zeus has given the Great King, Xerxes has "scorned his present *daimon*" (825) not only by venturing into Greece, but also, in bridging the Hellespont, by attempting to make sea into

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35 For Darius as untrustworthy, Gagarin, 1976, 49–52 and Michelini's response, 1982, 152 n. 50: "When the Queen and her counselors tell us that Darios was wise, prudent, and supremely fortunate, and when Darios claims oracular sanction for his words—in the absence of some skepticism voiced *within* the play—we cannot help but accept these judgments as valid, for the provisional reality of the drama" [italics original]; Griffith in Lloyd for Darius as a father figure; Alexanderson, 1967; Saïd, 1981; Parker and Griffith in Griffith et al. (2009), 128–129, 155–158; Fisher, 1992, 258–261; Broadhead, *Persae*, xxviii–ix for Darius as "dignified and majestic." For distortions of history regarding Darius, Saïd, 1981, 31–36; Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 215 n. 25; Kantzios, 2004, 13–14; Rosenbloom, 2006, 101–103, 146–147; and generally, Harrison, 2000b, 25–30; Connacher, 1996, 1–8; Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 1 answering Podlecki, 1966a, 8–9, with further sources. See Euben, 1986b, 362: "Obviously, Aeschylus is not offering a "historical" reconstruction of Salamis"; Mitsis in Pucci, 1988, 103–104 for Aeschylus working with the tension between history and myth.

36 On this passage, the second major reference to the gods in the *parodos*, Michelini, 1982, 84–85; Conacher, 1996, 12–13; Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 211: "When [the chorus] sing that their countrymen have put their trust in 'slender cables and devices for transport of a host,' they will be thinking of ships, but (after 71 f.) the audience may well remember the bridging of the Hellespont." I follow the manuscript in the ordering; for O. Müller's inversion of the two central verses, see Broadhead, *Persae*, 53–54; Winnington-Ingram, 1973, 211; Conacher, 1996, 12–13. Scott, 1968 and Hall, *Persians*, 115–116, defend the manuscript.

For the opposition of sea and land see Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 6–7; Michelini, 1982, 83: "Xerxes has thus attempted to link not one, but two sets of irreconcilables: Asia is joined to Europe and land to sea forces. In another sense, there is only one set: the Persians represent Asian land power, and the Greeks—through judicious emphasis on Salamis and the seaward dependencies listed in the last ode—are tacitly treated as a sea people." duBois, 1991, 84–85 cites Lloyd, 1966, 91 on "land and sea" as polar opposites, resembling "Greek and barbarian." See Hall, *Persians*, 21; Conacher, 1996, 121–123; Anderson, 1972, 167–168, 171–172 for sea and land throughout and for Aeschylus working through images; Hall, *Persians*, 16 for the association of Persians and Earth as contrasting masculine Greek gods to feminine Persian forces.

land (747–748, and see 749–750), a transformation terribly reversed when the frozen Strymon transforms itself back from road to river (495–509).[37]

Darius' speech thus brings to the fore an element of the divine will as applicable to Athens as to Persia. The chorus's lament that "All along the Asian land, / no longer will they be of Persian rule, / nor further will they pay tribute / to the king's necessity" (584–588) calls to mind Greek incursions into Persia that went back as far as Miltiades in the 520s.[38] Although the freeing of Greeks from Persian rule must have been seen as positive, and although it is unlikely that, as has occasionally been argued, the *Persians* is meant as a warning against Athenian imperialism, Darius' account of *hybris* must, at least in part, remind the Athenians that they too, particularly in their incursions into Persia, were subject to divine necessity.[39]

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37 Thus when Xerxes is described as trying "to master all the gods / even Poseidon" (749–750) "all the gods" helps emphasize Poseidon, made emphatic also through enjambment, as Wilson in Cropp et al, 1986, 57; Euben, 1986b, 365: "In bridging the Hellespont, Xerxes had thought to enslave the sea, lash nature to his mortal aims, ignore the separation between land and sea, east and west, Hellene and Barbarian, and so confound divine apportionments of fate and place." Against Lattimore's view (1943, 92) that Plataea is "thrust into an inconspicuous place in the narrative" see Taplin in Cairns, 7; Rosenbloom, 2006, 107 and Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 7–10 for the focus on Salamis as an element of the recurrent sea / land imagery. See Garvie, *Persae*, 302 for an alternate view.

38 As Aristophanes' Persian War veterans remind us—"And so, having taken many cities from the Medes / we are most responsible (*aitiotatoi*) for the tribute brought here" (*Wasps* 1098–1099). See Rosenbloom, 2006, 28–38 for Athenian engagement and 121 for the challenge, as heir to Darius' empire, to avoid Xerxes' example; Georges, 1994, 94–96; Kantzios, 2004, 19 for fear of Persian aggression. Hall, *Persians*, 4, 166 cites Thucydides 1.96 on the Delian League's aim "to push the Persians ever eastward and to extract compensation for the losses which had been incurred."

39 As a warning against Athenian imperialism, Melchinger, 1979, 36; Rabinowitz, 2008, 92–93; Momigliano, 1979. In contrast, Harrison, 2000b, 95: "Democracy and piety then together—whether these be naturally acquired, a reflection of virtue, or somehow both—immunize the Athenians from the dangers of Persian imperialism," citing Mills, 1997, 60, for whom the view exemplifies fourth-century encomia of an ideal Athens. For the Aeschylean theme of a common subjection to the divine see Helm, 2004; Rosenbloom, 2006, 135: "Readings that insist the *kommos* elicits only Schadenfreude or a sense of invulnerability based upon freedom, democracy, and Greek ethnic identity in effect argue that the play's depiction of the catastrophic outcome of Persian *hybris* encourages Athenian *hybris*"; Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 16: "This happened to Xerxes and Persia; there are human reasons why it did, and why it happened then. It still reflects a cosmic pattern which could afflict any human or nation at any time (one of the reasons, as we have seen, why it is difficult to interpret the play as projecting a plea for *Athenian* aggression against a weakened enemy)."

Aeschylus' solution to the problem of creating an emotional connection in the *Persians* is an ingenious one. Although Xerxes is the play's main focus from the fifth line on, he himself has a relatively minor role and, in pointed contrast to Darius, makes no narrative addition to the play.[40] Appearing on foot and ragged, less than two hundred lines from the end of the play, he sums up, visually, the themes that have run throughout, just as his lyric lament sums up the threnody that has been continuously building.[41] In placing the responsibility for the expedition completely on Xerxes, Aeschylus has freed the audience to sympathize first with the chorus, who, as the play begins, do not yet know (as the audience does) the fate of "the flower of the Persian land" (59), then with the Queen, who laments Xerxes' rashness, and finally with Darius, who condemns it.[42] As a result Aeschylus has been able to create a kind of rolling empathy, the final beneficiary of which is Xerxes himself.

To create an emotional charge in Athens in 472 with a play about the battle of Salamis was not a problem. To direct that emotional response was the key. The overwhelming list of Persian commanders named in the entry song (21 ff., and see 302 ff., 955. ff.) both builds up a sense of the threat to Athens and creates a feeling, presumably at first pleasurable, of the enormous loss to Persia. But as Ebbott has pointed out, this list, by following the form of Athenian casualty lists, also connects Persian and Athenian suffering.[43] Only eight years had passed since Salamis. A significant body of spectators would recall only too well the movement that Aeschylus recreates on stage: from dread and terror, to the

40 Michelini, 1982, 128–129: "Xerxes—so central to the theme of the play—is peripheral to its dramaturgy, since he arrives late, never speaks in lineverse, and meets no other actor"; Kitto, 1939, 33–34 misses Xerxes as having been able to provide a central focus, but sees him as unavailable as in Greece.

41 Ireland, 1973, 162–168; for various responses to Xerxes' appearance, Paduano, 1978, 12, 15–16; Hall, 1989, 70–72. Taplin, 1977, 123 sees Xerxes as arriving on foot, with l. 1001 describing the chariot he left behind; *contra* Hall, *Persians*, 173.

42 Conacher, 1996, 7–8; Michelini, 1982, 153 on Xerxes' mother and father, expressing sympathy and judgment, drawing the audience in; McCall in Cropp et al, 1986, 45–47 sees Aeschylus increasing sympathy by playing the Queen and Xerxes himself. In contrast Harrison, 2000b, 111: "Some variety of audience response is, of course, inevitable—some of the audience *might* have found the figure of the Queen's smothering maternal love both disgusting and 'seductively appealing,' as Griffiths [1998, 56] suggests—though there must be some limits to the variety of audience response" [original italics].

43 Ebbott, 2000, 96: "By recognizing the form of the Athenian casualty lists underlying the list of the Persian war dead, we can better understand the Athenians' possible emotional reaction to the Messenger's speech and, more significantly, their shared sense of connection."

encounter of the armies, to the first hope of recovery (in the play, with the survival of Xerxes), to mourning the dead. In particular, the refrain of "emptying the land of men" (118, 548–549, 730, 761) must have been poignant for those who lived through, and even decided upon, the evacuation of Athens.[44] The connection back is a primary reason for the focus on memory that runs throughout the play.[45] Another reason to remember lay in the danger implied in Darius' warning against another Persian attack on Greece (790–796). But along with these a third reason to remember might also be important—because the divine necessity experienced by Xerxes could also be felt by Athens.

2 The *Peace*: Finding a God for Athens

> The American Secretary of State, on a visit to Israel, was shown the Wailing Wall, and told that this was where Jews make their most sacred prayers. Joining in the custom, he prayed: "O Lord, let all your people live together in harmony."
>
> "Amen," responded the Israeli prime minister.
>
> "And Lord, let there be peace in the Middle East."
>
> "Amen," responded the prime minister.
>
> "And Lord, let Israel finally be able to return the land captured in the '67 war."
>
> "Idiot," said the prime minister, "you're talking to a wall."

44 Anderson, 1972, 169; Rosenbloom, 2006, 98: "The *Persians* reproduces the complexity of Salamis by transposing a version of the Athenian *pathos* [the "emptying out"] to Susa. From this distance, the Persian perspective focalizes Greek liberation, grief for its costs, and the vulnerability of naval imperialism"; Hall (*Persians*, 18–19; 2006, 209–211) on the balance between grief and pride in victory; Kuhns, 1991, 11–34 for a psychoanalytic study as a rite of mourning; Favorini, 2003 for the ambivalence of victory and loss; Pelling in Pelling, 1997, 16 n. 69; Rabinowitz, 2008, 94; duBois, 1991, 89; Goldhill, 1988, 193: "The *Persae* may not demonstrate the ironic questioning of a Euripides, but it is not hard to see it investigating attitudes within the polis to the recent victory, not least in the tension between the lauding of Athens and the values that led to triumph, and the extensive mourning for the enemy victims of that triumph."

45 Hall, *Persians*, 1, 165.

Like the *Persians*, Aristophanes' *Peace* was occasioned by and is primarily about war. Rather than concerning himself with human vulnerability, however, Trugaios models his venture on the fable of the dung beetle, who, lowly as he was, defeated both the eagle and its patron, Zeus (Aesop, *Fab*. 3, *Peace* 129 ff.).[46] Also unlike the *Persians*, which creates an amorphous but universal sense of the divine, the *Peace* is very particular about the Greek gods that it depicts. And while the play shares the *Persians*' concern with the need to respect something beyond the merely human, it is also, like the not entirely sensitive joke that heads this section, about human beings' selective application of that need. The *Peace* presents the goddess Peace, wrested from the gods by the hero Trugaios, as crucial to human life, a divine force to be held sacred and respected, not to be abused and manhandled by mere men. But like the Wailing Wall, Peace is also a human construction, a statue, and a divinity we create for ourselves.[47]

The *Peace* also resembles *Persians* in having a rather unusual hero. As we have seen, since the *Persians* has a "hero" that Athens was predisposed to hate, Aeschylus used an unusual, indirect method of establishing an emotional connection. The *Peace* is unusual in the opposite way, in that it is one of very few extant plays in which both the hero and his scheme are sympathetic from beginning to end.

The ambivalence of *Peace* lies elsewhere, in the play's "universality" and in its gods. Although Aristophanes never attempts to universalize to the extent that Aeschylus does, he tries in *Peace*, as he did in *Acharnians*, to get Athens to see the enemy's point of view. Here he goes so far as to efface the differences between Greeks, transforming a chorus of Athenians, Megarians, Argives, and Spartans into a chorus of, as it were, farmers without borders, enabling them only then to haul Peace from the cave in which the gods have hidden her. Like the *Persians*, moreover, *Peace* applies its gesture toward universality to Athens's current political situation, here the Peace of Nicias, signed less than two weeks after the play was produced (Thuc. 5.17). But unlike the *Persians*, the *Peace*

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46 See also *Wasps* 1446–1448; *Lys*. 695; Sommerstein, *Wasps*, 243; Nichols, 1988, 138; Rothwell, 1995, 236 on the victory of the meek; Olson, *Peace*, xxxiv–v on the story as showing affiliation with a god to be ineffectual.

47 For the worship of "personifications," Stafford, 2000; for human beings creating the gods, Xenophanes B14–16; the *Sisyphus* fragment (Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 9.54; Critias 43 F 19); Plato, *Laws* 889e: "the gods are human contrivances, they do not exist in nature but only by custom and law"; Aristotle, *Politics* 1252b25: "Just as human beings compare the appearance of the gods to themselves, so also with their way of life"; Guthrie, 1971, 226–249; Conacher, 1998, 97–99, 114. As Stafford, 13–17, the common representation of abstractions on vases and statues made the reification much easier.

never gets the universal to really fit. Aristophanes' hero confronts the gods and gains a universal (or at least a Panhellenic) good, but when it comes time to go home again, "all of Greece" proves a good deal harder to get to than his own particular city-state, Athens. The peace that Trugaios brings back to Athens is completely positive. The difficulty lies in the question of what is happening in the rest of Greece.

The nub of *Peace* is embodied in Peace herself, the play's central character. Like Lysistrata, she gives her name to the comedy. Unlike Lysistrata, she is not also the protagonist, since she is a statue. Aristophanes places a great deal of emphasis on the fact that Peace is a statue, and it is clear from his fellow comedians' comments that the device was memorable. Although scholars have tended to neglect the centrality of the statue, this may be because we tend to experience the play by reading. Seen in performance, the statue of Peace, described by Aristophanes' contemporaries as a "kolossos," would dominate the stage from the time of its appearance, well before the *parabasis*, until the end of the play.[48]

Aristophanes emphasizes that Peace is a statue through Hermes' discourse on Pheidias, to whom Peace is said to be kin (*suggenes*, 618), and who was famous for the statue of Zeus at Olympia and the gold and ivory statue of Athena in the Parthenon (116–118), the starting point of Hermes' story. Moreover, by having Peace accompanied by the mute female characters, Festival-going and Harvest, who prove unusually active and mobile for female abstractions (905–906, 1329 ff.), Aristophanes emphasizes the immobility of the "goddess" they accompany. He also makes us notice that Peace is a human construction by pretending that she isn't, having Hermes "report" what the statue says (668–669) and having her turn her head (682)—a movement, presumably, as startling as that of the Commendatore's statue in *Don Giovanni*. The emphasis continues in her formal "installation" (923), where she is ritually addressed

48 Eupolis 62; Platon 86; Scholion on Plato, *Apol.* 19c.; given the competitive nature of comic poetry the notice implies success rather than failure. Although, as Olson, *Peace*, xliv; Slater, 2002, 122, 282 n. 31, *kolossikos* need not imply size, the humorous possibilities make this seem likely; for a penchant for outsized props in Cratinus see Bakola, 2010, 239–242 and for the same in comedy generally, Revermann, 2006, 244–246. For a possible representation of Peace, Stafford, 2000, 187 n. 68; for an actual cult, established 375/4, MacDowell, 1995, 192–193; Sommerstein, *Peace*, 181; Stafford, 2000, 173–177. As Samons, 2004, 172; R. Parker, 1996, 228–237, the cult responded to a particular historical event. Of Aristophanes' extant plays only *Peace*, *Lysistrata* and *Wealth* are not named after the chorus (Cartledge, 1990, 33, who leaves out *Peace*). *Wealth* is closely parallel as the main action is also the discovery and establishment of the titular divinity.

(974–992) and has her probable likes and dislikes analyzed (1019–1020), all as she stands huge and silent in the middle of the stage.[49]

The comic point is straightforward: as Hermes' account reminds us (605–618), Peace, like the statues Pheidias created (and like the theme of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, produced two years earlier), is a god made by human beings.[50] The device thus encapsulates the play's essential idea, that Peace is a human rather than a divine responsibility, a point that Aristophanes reinforces, in a usual move, by inverting tragedy. The parallel between Trugaios' flight to heaven on his dung beetle and Bellerophon's on Pegasus is given a good deal of play in the opening scenes (75, 134–135, 146–148, 154)—and the reference to Euripides' *Bellerophon* continues to serve, as Dobrov has pointed out, as background throughout the play.[51] Like Bellerophon, Trugaios, furious at the misery the gods give men, decides to challenge them.[52] Bellerophon fails. He falls from Pegasus, is crippled, and "when he was hated by all the gods / then he wandered alone, along the plain of Aleios / eating out his heart, and shunning the track of men" (*Iliad* 6. 200–202). Trugaios, in contrast, succeeds. Rather than falling from his steed, when he cannot take his dung beetle back to earth because, like Pegasus, it has been requisitioned by the gods (and because the actor cannot access the crane while onstage) he walks back, suffering nothing worse than

49 See, similarly, Strepsiades' chat with the statue of Hermes at *Clouds* 1478–1485; Aristophanes fr. 591 for goddesses set up in the marketplace; Platon, 204 for Hermes talking to a wooden statue of Daedalus.

50 Slater, 2002, 122–126 and Russo, 1994, 141–143 see the association with Pheidias as giving dignity. The talking statue however, as the hoopla of dragging her out, tends more towards burlesque, arguing for a rather comic "untouchable and immobile being, devoid of carnal attributes" (Russo, 1994, 141). The joke is both underlined and saved from excessive impiety by the fact that the ancient wooden statue of Athena, not Pheidias,' was the sacred object of the Acropolis (*Lys*. 262; Ehrenberg, 1951, 256).

51 Dobrov, 2001, 89–104, with a focus on human agency replacing the divine agency of tragedy; Rau, 89–97 for the centrality of the parody; L.P.E. Parker, 1997, 264–267 for the tragic parody of the lyric dactyls in Trugaios' setting out. Hall, 2006, 338–344 sees a movement from tragedy to satyr play, with the rescue of Peace, then back to comedy. For the *Bellerophon* and the earlier *Stheneboea* (also using a winged horse) Collard in Collard et al., *Euripides*, 1.98–120 and 79–97.

52 Reckford, 1987, 86–88 on Bellerophon's quest and fr. 286 and possibly 292 for his attitude to the gods. Collard in Collard et al., *Euripides*, 1.98 summarizes: "the gnomic fragments suggest that it was one of Euripides' most sustained treatments of man's disillusion with god"; Webster, 1967b, 109–111 for Bellerophon as heroic resister; Reckford, 1987, 45 for *Peace* as working out anxieties about divine hostility.

sore feet, favored by god (in the person of Hermes) and man.[53] Most importantly, he has learned why the gods abandoned the Greeks to war: because they were disgusted at the Greeks' continual refusal to make peace (205–219).

What Trugaios learns is that Bellerophon's premise was wrong: it is not the gods, but rather human beings, who cause human misery. Nor is it difficult to see the point of the lesson. While Aristophanes' play is a celebration of coming peace, it is also a warning (and a prescient one) that unless the Greeks unite to establish peace, they will find themselves, all together, pulverized by war (242–254). In this context, Trugaios' plan to indict Zeus for Medizing (107–108) is a bitter joke—since it was not Zeus, but both Athens and Sparta (as the capture of a Persian ambassador had recently revealed) who were negotiating with Persia (Thuc. 4.50, 2.7, and see 1.82, 2.67). But if it is humans who are responsible for war, it is also humans who (literally, since she is a statue) make peace. This, the more hopeful side of Aristophanes' warning, is dramatized in the climactic scene in which the chorus (again literally) pull together and manage, by their own efforts, and with no help from the gods, to haul Peace back into the light. Since the recent truce had made travel possible once again, it is likely that the play's audience was unusually international, perhaps including the ambassadors in Athens to formalize the coming treaty. It is a shame that they did not listen more closely.[54]

In moving agency from the divine to the human, however, Aristophanes has not made all simple and uncomplicated. Rather, the move serves to reveal the fissures that the human level contains. The first half of *Peace* assures us that both Trugaios and his pursuit of peace are completely positive. But while the first half reveals the need for all of Greece to pull together, the second begins to wonder where "all of Greece" might be located. In Aristophanes' usual double vision, the doubt does not make the need for Panhellenism any less urgent—it only shows that if humans want a cause greater than themselves to rely on, they have to invent it themselves.

In order to make it clear that the Greeks need to work together, Aristophanes makes Trugaios and his mission unambiguous, and points out the lack of ambiguity by contrasting Trugaios to the hero of his earlier play, the *Acharnians*. Recent work on the interplay between the comic poets has shown how pervasively they used what Bakola has called "the ongoing relationship between

53 Olson, *Peace*, 230 on Trugaios' lameness as a reference to Bellerophon.

54 Revermann, 2006a, 172–175; for the international audience, as the opening reference to an Ionian (45–46), Hall, 2006, 335–336 and for Athenians at the Spartan Hyacinthia, Meier, 1993, 58. In fact, as *Peace* 466, 475, 481; Thuc. 5.21ff. the Boeotians, Argives, and Megarians (and the Corinthians) declined to pull together.

author and audience."[55] Presumably because much of the audience attended the dramatic festivals regularly, playwrights could assume an awareness of earlier plays, as in Aristophanes' frequent references to his own earlier work, Cratinus' taking up the mockery of *Knights* 526–536 in his *Wineflask*, Aristophanes' accusation that Eupolis' *Maricas* plagiarized *Knights* (*Clouds* 553–554), or Eupolis' counter-charge that he helped compose *Knights* and made a gift of it to Aristophanes (fr. 89).[56] In the *Peace*, Aristophanes uses intertextuality in a rather different way, setting Trugaios against Dikaiopolis, his comic hero of four years earlier, in order to point out their differences.[57]

The parallels between the *Acharnians* and the *Peace* are unmistakable. Like Dikaiopolis (and unlike any other extant Aristophanic hero except Strepsiades), Trugaios is a small farmer. He is uniquely like Dikaiopolis in being a small farmer concerned only with obtaining peace. In both plays the hero spends the first half of the play fighting to gain peace and the second enjoying the peace he has obtained. The *Peace* also recalls the *Acharnians* in its speech about Pericles starting the war (*Acharn.* 515 ff., *Peace* 605 ff.), its peacetime market frequented by Megarians, Boeotians, and their eels (*Peace* 999–1006), in transforming instruments of war into objects of peace (*Acharn.* 581 ff., *Peace.* 1224 ff.), and in highlighting Lamachus, here in the person of his son (*Peace* 1289–1290).[58] Moreover, Aristophanes uses the word *trugody*, with which he identified himself with Dikaiopolis (496–500), to imply the same identification with Trugaios.[59] Even without noticing that both heroes also, self-consciously, take on the role of a ragged Euripidean hero, there is plenty of overlap.

But while Dikaiopolis and Trugaios are strikingly similar, the difference between them is equally obvious. Both bring peace to Athens, but Dikaiopolis' peace was a private one, while Trugaios' is emphatically for everybody (*Peace*

55 Bakola, 2010, 117.

56 See Biles, 2002 and 2011, 134–166 on Cratinus and Aristophanes; Welsh, 1990, 427; Bakola, 2010, 16–24 on the *Wineflask*; and Storey, 2003, 278 ff. on Eupolis.

57 McGlew, 2005, 76; Platter, 2006, 145 for a deliberate reference to the *Acharnians* in a much later play, the *Women at the Thesmophoria*. For familiarity with earlier dramas in a stratified audience "who share a considerable level of theatrical competence" (100) Revermann, 2006b; Ruffell, 2002 and Aristophanes' usual incorporation of his poetic career into his plays (*Acharn.* 502 ff., *Knights* 512 ff., *Wasps* 1284 ff.).

58 See MacDowell, 1995, 198; Henderson, 1991a, 62–66 for the reference to the *Acharnians*, and Henderson for a move in both plays from negative scatological to positive sexual obscenity, with the move occurring generally in *Peace* and limited to Dikaiopolis in *Acharnians*.

59 Hall, 2006, 333–335 for Trugaios, a hero of trugody, bearing a strong resemblance to Aristophanes.

909–923). Aristophanes underlines the difference by having Trugaios bring Festival-going through the theater audience in order to (yet again literally) hand her over to the Council (877 ff.),[60] by publicly installing Peace as an object of worship (924 ff.), by specifying that the new market is for "all of us in bunches" (1006), and most of all through his feast. As we have seen, Dikaiopolis' ambivalent position is marked by his refusal to share his banquet with the chorus. In contrast, Trugaios pointedly invites both the audience (1115–1116) and the chorus (1305 ff.) to join in. It has even been proposed that the chorus does something otherwise unheard of—they remove the masks that set them off from the audience and, as the ordinary Athenian citizens they are, share Trugaios' feast.[61]

But though the notion that we ourselves are responsible for peace is not ambiguous in the *Peace*, the "we ourselves" who must undertake it is. Just as the *Acharnians* raised some questions about Dikaiopolis' relation to Athens, *Peace* raises some questions about Athens's relation to Greece. The ambiguity also casts an ironic light on tragedy's use of the gods to create a sense of universality. Aristophanes' version of the universal in the *Peace* is Trugaios' emphatically Panhellenic mission. Trugaios uses the phrases "Greece," "the Greeks," "the cities," and "Panhellenic" no fewer than seven times in the first three hundred lines of the play (59, 63, 93, 105–106, 108, 266, 292), summons the chorus in these terms (292, 302), and uses them to win over Hermes (204, 408, 421, 436).[62] But just when Hermes' hostility is assuaged (425–458) and the chorus begin their pull, they are opposed not, as we have been led to fear, by the reappearance of War, but rather by themselves.[63] At the moment that the hostility of the gods abates, the chorus shifts suddenly from "Panhellenes" into Boeotians (466)

60 Where she presumably remains, as Olson, *Peace*, 242–243; Slater, 2002, 127–128.

61 See Sommerstein, 1984b, 152 n. 36; Olson, *Peace*, 313; and Moulton, 1981, 82–108 for a focus on feasting, negative and positive. Trugaios' "What a crowd!" (1192) naturally refers to the audience, as Olson, *Peace*, 295–296, and he certainly sprinkles them with barley groats (962–966). Additionally, Dikaiopolis celebrates every festival but the Lenaia, while Festival-going suggests "entertaining, Dionysus-festivals, flutes, tragedies, Sophocles-songs, thrushes and little Euripidiplets" (530); Dikaiopolis opens the second half of the play by setting up boundaries, Trugaios by crossing the boundary between orchestra and audience; Dikaiopolis' peace establishes a marketplace, Trugaios' brings him back to his farm (551, 1318), Dikaiopolis' original desire.

62 "Festival-going" also implies Panhellenism, as 873–905, and is a sign of "Greekness," as Herodotus 5.22 or the Panhellenic practice of dating by the Olympiad.

63 For the surprising absence of War, despite Trugaios' warnings that he could reappear at any moment (309–339), see Russo, 1994, 134–135 who sees this as a fault in composition.

and Argives (475, 493) and Spartans (479–480) and Megarians (481, 500) and Athenians (503) and even Lamachus (473).

The shift implies an ironic relation of Greek unity to the gods. In Herodotus, the Athenians describe Greece as united by their common gods (8.144). In the *Peace*, that unity, as Trugaios emphasizes in his opening scene, is created by the gods' hostility. As in the *Knights*, where the knights and the sausage seller unite because both are opposed to Paphlagon, or the *Birds*, where Peisetairos wins over the birds by setting up a common opposition to the gods (468 ff.), the nature of the "us" in *Peace* depends largely on who we see as the "them."[64] While the divine is "other" to the human, human beings are akin. When the divine threat fades and Hermes favors the human project, the "other" becomes other human beings, and people remember that they are not so much Panhellenes as they are Athenians or Spartans or Megarians or farmers or Lamachus.[65]

The human quality that has thus emerged is the inherent fluidity of human identity, a fluidity expressed even in Trugaios' name, which means, depending on the scene, either "the comic-tragic one" or "the vintner" (190, 912–922, 1339–1340).[66] For the moment, however, the problem is also the solution—and as such reveals another example of "mere comic license" proving to be the point. The chorus of the *Peace* is notoriously indeterminate. They are introduced as farmers, merchants, carpenters, craftsmen, resident aliens, strangers, and islanders (296–298), then become Argives, Spartans, Megarians, and Boeotians, and are finally dismissed (508–511) to make way for the "farmers without

64 The "Knights" join Aristophanes "because he hates the same men as we do" (510); the *parabasis* of *Peace* joins Aristophanes and the audience against Cleon (754–774) and the common "interloper" scenes create sympathy with the hero against the usurpers, as *Peace* 1052 ff., 1210 ff. and see 444 ff., 545 ff. For the "other" as, for preference, foreign (as "Paphlagon") MacDowell in Sommerstein et al., 359–372.

65 Perlman, 1976, 4 on "Hellenic," "Panhellenism," etc.: "It is not the component of common unity which is paramount in the history of these terms, but the antithesis between the Greeks and the other nations, especially, between the Greeks and the Persians, between the Greeks and the barbarians" and 5: "There was, of course, a common bond among the Greeks based on the feelings of common origin, common language, common religion, customs and ways of life. But inter-state relations within the world of the Greek polis were based on one *conditio sine qua non*—the autonomous and free Greek polis"; Walbank in Harrison, 2002; Hall, 2006, 187; Ehrenberg, 1951, 309–310 for Aristophanes as not Panhellenic; Henderson, 1980, 168–169; Newiger, 1980 for a contrary view. In the crowning irony, from the gods' point of view their shortsighted, self-interested combativeness makes Laconians and "Atticonians" (211–220) indistinguishable.

66 Olson, *Peace*, 105–106; Dobrov, 2001, 97; Hall, 2006, 328–333 on the extraordinary vocal range required as well.

borders" who succeed in rescuing Peace.[67] But since Aristophanes can hardly have been keeping a second twenty-four-man chorus in reserve, the staging of the substitution has been a matter of controversy. The solution most often adopted is the most obvious one: a good deal of confused running about and switching places, and then the positioning at the ropes of precisely the same chorus members who had just been expelled. Rather than being an unfortunate necessity, the staging makes an excellent comic point—that the chorus that accomplishes the job is exactly the same as the one that failed, just in different hats.[68]

In the rescue of Peace, Aristophanes has gone as universal, and as close to tragedy, as he goes—he has moved his interest in human agency (and the fluidity of human identity) from his usual focus on Athens to a focus on all of Greece. The difficulty is that while "all of Greece" is an excellent notion, it does not have a Council to whom Trugaios can return Festival-going. Trugaios is pointedly unlike Dikaiopolis in bringing home a peace that is for everyone, but the "everyone," as the idea of home (720) implies, increasingly becomes everyone in Athens.

The shift first appears on Olympus. When Peace emerges, Hermes points out "how the cities all chat to one another, / reconciled, and laugh with delight" (539–540). This is followed by a contrast of the sickle- and hoe-makers, the followers of peace, to the sword- and spear-makers, the promoters of war (543–555), a contrast that cuts across political divisions and unites the chorus in their enjoyment of the countryside (583–600).[69] But when Hermes points out to Trugaios and the chorus leader that Spartan farmers have suffered just as

67 Hall, 2006, 325; MacDowell, 1995, 185 on the chorus as left vague; Stone, 1981, 381–383, focusing on costume, on a basic farmer chorus with the rest as extras; Sommerstein, *Peace*, xviii–ix; Zimmerman, 1984, vol. 1, 262–265.

68 As Dover, 1972, 136–139; Sifakis, 1971, 29–32; Dobrov, 2001, 103–104; Platnauer, *Peace*, xiv. The chorus is similarly in "heaven" or in "Athens" depending on Aristophanes' wish, as P.D. Arnott, 1962, 105. For other jokes on theatrical necessity, Cary, 1937 on Charon's boat visibly dragged across stage; Dane, 1984 on the confusion of *WT* 927–929; Silk in Pelling, 1990, 167–168 on shifts in the chorus's identity. The shifts are prefigured in the prayer that spear makers and shield sellers perish (447 ff.) and the greeting to "farmers and merchants and carpenters / and craftsmen [*demiourgoi*] and aliens and strangers / and islanders" (296–298). Landfester, 1977, 296–297 gives l. 508, calling on farmers alone, to Trugaios, but see Olson, *Peace*, 181.

69 Moulton, 1981, 100 for the universal implied in the focus on countrymen; Stafford, 2000, 173–197 on the traditional association of peace, wealth and farming, going back to Hesiod's Peace looking after "the works / fields (*erga*) for mortals" (*WD* 903); McGlew, 2001 on the initial unification, but not its disruption.

they have (625–627, 633), they reply, incensed by the damage done to their farms, that the Spartans deserved just what they got (628–631).[70] The concerns that follow, such as Cleon and Hyperbolus or Sophocles and Cratinus (673–703), are quite specifically Athenian. Although the setting is still Olympus, when the goddess asks who was most hostile to her "here" (671), the "here" (like Trugaios' subsequent "in the city," 705) is quite clearly Athens.

This shift, by questioning how "Panhellenic" Greece can be, creates the tension of the play's second half. Although the first half of *Peace* is unique among Aristophanes' early works in being set largely outside of Athens, the play gets there eventually. Correspondingly, the chorus shifts its identity yet again, this time to become simply an Athenian chorus. In this context the *parabasis*, with its references to "our producer" (738), the good "I" have done for Athens (754), and the *ad hominem* jokes about Athenian tragic poets, simply continues the Athenianization begun on Olympus.[71] As Trugaios' prayer to "mix us Greeks / anew from the start / with friendship juice" (996–997) moves from "us Greeks" to "our marketplace (*agora*)" (999) to "all of us" (1006) jostling the specifically Athenian Morsychus, Teleas, and Glaucetes (1000–1015), Panhellenism gives way to the actual here and now of Athens. The Athenian "us" of "our marketplace" (or "our festival" [815–817]) is set in contrast to the private peace and marketplace of the *Acharnians*, but it is also a contrast to the Panhellenism that opened the play. In a sense, the shift was inevitable, particularly given comedy's usual interest in things. Peace the concept can be shared universally. Peace the physical statue has to be in one place or another. By returning to Athens, the *Peace* sets the ideal of Panhellenism against an actual community. The latter may be more limited, but it has the advantage of being generally accepted as real.

But while Athens may be "real" in a much more concrete sense than "all of Greece," even she, as we saw in looking at the *Acharnians*, is more a concept than a thing. Aristophanes, accordingly, takes the idea of "us" and "ours" even further. In a commonly unremarked, but quite distinct theme, the *Peace* has a particular interest in the physical objects that belong to a community, and the possibility of pilfering them. The theme stretches from Hermes' sticky fingers (193, 423–425) to his watching over the property of the gods (201–202) to the sun and moon "nibbling" days away from the Greek pantheon (414–415)

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70 The likening of Laconian peasants to Athenian farmers, is itself, of course, rather dubious, as Sommerstein, *Peace*, 162 citing Cassio, 1982.

71 Also recycling a passage from the *Wasps*, of the year before (*Peace* 752–759, *Wasps* 1030–1037). The only unusual factor is that here the chorus makes no reference to its own particular identity in the play.

to Hierocles' pilfering (1103–1126) and the warning that the stage properties might be stolen (729–732).[72] It applies even to Pheidias, the creator of the greatest Panhellenic and Panathenaic objects of all. As the audience knew, the "trouble" that Hermes points to as the first cause of the war (605) was Pheidias' imprisonment for embezzling materials from the great gold and ivory statue of Athena.[73] We are reminded that while a community, unlike a concept, can own physical objects, they belong more readily to whoever happens to take them into his own possession.

There is a cynical answer to the question of why Aristophanes, having created a Panhellenic ideal, returns at the end of his play to Athens. It is that however Panhellenic the audience of the City Dionysia was in 421, the prize was awarded by the Athenians. In this case the cynical answer is the right one. Athens may be merely a human construct, but unlike "all of Greece" it is a human construct that has a Council and awards prizes. Aristophanes could construct Peace out of purely human materials, but having done so, he had to put her somewhere. The obvious choice was the theater available to him.

There are no farms without borders. Trugaios may abandon the categories of "Athenian" and "Spartan" for "farmer," but he still has to return to a particular farm in a particular place, in this case Athmonum (190, 918), just as the chorus's interest, in their last incarnation as farmers, is their own particular farms, emphasized by the abundance of proper names in their description (1127–1158).[74] In the same way, Aristophanic comedy does not incline to the universal. While the *Persians* grounded Athens's hopes for continued peace in a universal respect for the divine, Aristophanes looks instead to a purely human and very particular community. There are disadvantages. Unlike the divine, which is eternal and unchanging, human identity, from "human" to "Greek" to "Athenian" to "me," is constantly in flux. "Athens," unlike "all of Greece," can be pointed to—in the shared property of Pheidias' gold and ivory Athena, or in the seven thousand people in the theater who "are" all two hundred thousand

72 Perhaps also in the odd and unexplained reference to Sophocles' love of money (697–699).

73 For the charges see Pollitt, 1999, 97–98; MacDowell, 1995, 186–189. Bakola, 2010, 213–218 discusses the relation of Pheidias and Pericles in relation to Cratinus' *Wealth-gods* and see 305–312 for Pheidias' trial.

74 As deme membership was hereditary, an actual Athenian did not necessarily live in his deme. In comedy, however, the deme characterizes the hero, particularly countrymen, as Olson, *Peace*, 105. Whitehead, 1986, 67–69, 353–356, 361 n. 48 on deme loyalty, particularly in farmers, and Yeats: tragic emotion drowns the dykes that separate man from man, while comedy builds its houses on them (*Essays and Introductions*, 241).

Athenians, but the identity is ambivalent.[75] While people recognize it, it is true. When they do not, the community dissolves and the great statue of Athena is only so much gold and ivory to pocket. But the ambivalence also has a positive side, since, if peace is a human creation, when human beings act as if it really exists, it really does.[76]

3 The *Birds*: An Athenian on Olympus

Gonzalo: I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty—
Sebastian: Yet he would be king on't.
Antonio: The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest*

If the *Peace* serves as a contrast to *Persians* in its questioning of the universal, *Birds* inverts Aeschylus' view of the gods in an even more fundamental way. In the *Persians*, as in the *Oresteia*, the divine is a wellspring of order, both cosmic and human. In the *Birds*, Aristophanes' hero, Peisetairos, reverses the *Persians*' vision of an order and limit imposed on human ambition by taking over Zeus' sovereign role and revealing the power of human *eros* to transform

75 On population and theater size, Sommerstein in Revermann; Samons, 2004, 20, 169; Martin, 1996, 55. For *Symposium* 175e, which seems to put the seating capacity at 30,000, see Rusten, 2011, 404.

76 So when Greeks agree on an Olympic truce every four years, war miraculously vanishes (879 ff.), as the truce's reinstatement in the Peace of Nicias would make vivid (Thuc. 5.18).

everything into its own image.[77] But, as usual, there is an ambivalence. Zeus may be the foundation of order, but it was also his reign that put an end to the golden age. Peisetairos takes over Zeus' role in this respect as well: his conquest ends by eliminating exactly the idleness and harmony that he had originally been seeking. In tragedy, as we have seen in both the *Oresteia* and the *Persians*, memory ties the apparent freedom of the present to the necessity of the past. Comedy, in contrast, jettisons antecedents, memory, and necessity with complete ease, enabling Peisetairos' Cloudcuckooton, like Gonzalo's commonwealth, to simply forget its own beginning.[78]

Despite its setting, the *Birds*, like Aristophanes' other extant fifth-century plays, is about Athens. Like both *Persians* and *Peace*, *Birds* sets a conflict between men and gods against the background of war, although a war that here lies only in the background. When the *Birds* was produced in 414, Athens was at the height of its attempt to conquer Sicily, an expedition that was, perhaps, the clearest illustration that the Athenians were indeed a people born never to rest themselves and never to allow others to rest (Thuc. 1.70). But while it seems likely, as many scholars have felt, that the play bears a relation to Athenian imperialism, there is a good deal of disagreement about what that relation is.[79] As often, the disagreement centers on the comic hero. Those who see Peisetairos as an Athenian who goes mad for power (and so ends by roasting his own citizens, 1583–1586) view the play as a criticism of the expedition.[80]

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77 Arrowsmith, 1973; Ludwig, 2002; Meyer in Mhire and Frost in relation to the tyrant of the *Republic*.

78 *Nephelokokkugia*, usually "Cloudcuckooland," seems traditional for "Never-neverland," as ll. 821–823; Sommerstein, *Birds*, 251; contra, Dunbar, *Birds*, 332. I use "Cloudcuckooton" since what Peisetairos founds is explicitly a *polis* (Sommerstein *Birds*, 1 n. 2) and Sommerstein's "Cloudcuckooville" sounds, to my ears, slightly suburban.

79 See Dearden, 1976, 42 for Athenian comedy as generally about Athens, and, in contrast, Dunbar, *Birds*, 4–5 for the play (as Hypothesis II 9–14) as utopian. For the play as an escape from war see Blaiklock, 1954, 98–111; as a criticism of tyranny, Arrowsmith, 1973; as utopian, Konstan, 1995, 3–22; and Hubbard, 1991, 23–50, as a dystopia. Romer, 51–74 in Dobrov, 1997 sees morally ambiguity, as also Romer, 1994 for the play as *Realpolitik* with piety based on power, while, Henderson, in Dobrov, 1997, 135–148, points to the positive side of Peisetairos. For a survey of views see MacDowell, 1995, 227–228 and the various interpretations in Dobrov, although cast in the either / or terms of either an escapist fantasy or a satire on the Sicilian Expedition. Hubbard, 1991, 42 provides a bibliography.

80 Sommerstein, *Birds*, 303 and 2–3 compares *Animal Farm*; Hubbard in Dobrov, 1997, 35 and 45 n. 62 for further references; *contra* Henderson in Dobrov, 1997, 144–145; MacDowell, 1995, 225: "the line is merely a joke which passes immediately" neglects the onstage action and Heracles' gluttony as reminders.

Those who feel that we are meant to identify with Peisetairos and the play's triumphant ending see the play as supporting it.[81] And as the play provides ample evidence for both points of view, there seems little chance of settling the question.

There is, however, another possibility: as in the case of the *Acharnians*, when scholars prove unable to decide which of two competing interpretations is correct, it may be because both are. Aristophanes uses his normal comic techniques in *Birds* to balance our positive and negative views of Peisetairos. As he often does in presenting us with an insane result (as with Dikaiopolis' private peace or Chremylus' unblinding of Wealth), Aristophanes makes the steps to it seem natural and even inevitable. In the *Birds* this seamlessness both points out a tendency of events to determine human aims and decisions, rather than the other way around, and makes it impossible to decide where or how Peisetairos moved from benefactor to *tyrannos* of the birds (1708). In addition, the fact that an Aristophanic hero often has an ambivalent relation to the chorus warns against taking Peisetairos' increasing dominance, as exemplified in the roasting scene, as necessarily for or against him. The scene certainly points to the incongruity of forming a commonwealth with beings that one also eats and, as a comment on the nature of unequal relations, makes an interesting observation about Athens and her allies. In the context of a performance, however, what the scene leads into is the absorbing exuberance of Peisetairos' victory.

While in the *Acharnians* Aristophanes used the ambivalence of his hero to comment on the *polis*, in *Birds* the ambivalence comments on human ambition and the human relation to the gods. The most immediate target, however, is Athens. As many scholars have commented, as the *Birds* progresses the land of the birds comes to look less and less like the idyllic world of "white-sesame, myrtle-berries, poppies, and water-mint," the life of newlyweds (159–161), that Peisetairos and Euelpides were seeking, and more and more like Athens, the place they were trying to escape.[82] Having rejected Athena as a patron for

81 Rothwell, 2007, 176–181; Dunbar, *Birds*, 12: "the audience were expected to see Peisetairos as a sympathetic character"; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 166–177 sees Peisetairos as a new Tereus; Reckford, 1987, 342 for a balance of positive and negative.

82 For the golden age see the birds' life without money (156–157), Tereus' call to gather (230–259) and their various lyrics (737–752, 769–784, 1088–1101). In Old Comedy generally see Cratinus' *Wealth-gods*, Telecleides' *Amphictyons*, Crates' *Beasts*, Eupolis' *Golden Race*, Pherecrates' *Wildmen*, Archippus' *Fish*, Phrynichus' *Loner*; Storey, 2003, 268–269; Ceccarelli, 453–471 in Harvey and Wilkins; Dunbar, *Birds*, 6–7; Sutton, 1980b, 58–65. For the disappearance of the golden age under Zeus' (here gradual) domination, Hesiod *WD* 109–120, 143–144; also *Prometheus Bound* 436 ff. and the *Republic*'s "city of pigs" (372a ff.).

his newfound city (828–831), Peisetairos comes to incorporate more and more Athenian elements: the sacred robe of the Panathenaea (827), a rocky Acropolis (836), and a *Pelargikon* (the wall around the Acropolis, whose name recalls the Greek word for a stork, 832).[83] His visitors move from the Panhellenic to the Athenian, while he himself moves from rejecting outsiders to ordering wings for ten thousand expected new settlers (1305–1334).[84] By the time the young Athenian arrives, drawn by the promised ability to disregard *nomos* (755–759), it turns out that the birds too have *nomos*, and it looks very much like the Athenian one (1353–1370). Finally, Peisetairos points out to Heracles that his father, Zeus, never introduced him into an [Athenian] phratry (1668–1669, and see 1650 ff.). Even the gods, it seems, have to have their legitimacy verified by Athens, while the "other" that was Cloudcuckooton has come to take on purely Athenian standards.

The *Birds* presents us with a hero seeking a place where he can mind his own business (*topon apragmona*, *Birds* 44) and also rule the cosmos, one whose very name ("Comrade-persuader," and see 339–340) implies an attachment to others, but who regularly and almost imperceptibly sheds his fellow workers, one who is off looking for birds while his companion explains the plot (13–22) and yet who comes, almost without noticing it, to take over the play.[85] The inconsistencies recall Athens, a city that prided itself on its leisure (Thuc. 2.38) and yet never rested (Thuc. 1.70), that saw itself as both tyrant (Thuc. 2.63, 3.37; *Knights* 1114) and benevolent leader (Thuc. 1.73–77, 2.40), and that seems to have risen to be the greatest state in Greece almost by accident.[86] Athens's

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83 Sommerstein, *Birds*, 1, n. 3, 252; Arrowsmith, 1973; Whitman, 1964, 198; Dobrov, 2001, 118–120; Slater, 2002, 148: "Divine democracy is represented by a glutton and a dolt, while bird democracy devours its own. It is hard to claim we have come very far from Athens after all." A.M. Bowie, 1993, 175 quotes Psalm 139.7–9 "Whither shall I go from thy spirit …"; and for Peisetairos' Greek identity, *Birds* 1244.

84 From the Panhellenic Homer etc. (904 ff.) and Bacis (958 ff.; Herodotus, 8.20, 77, 96; 9.43) to Meton an Athenian (as 998) with a universal approach to city-planning, to the Athenian Inspector and decree seller (1021 ff.; Meiggs, 1972, 212–213, 583–586; Dunbar, *Birds*, 384–387), Cinesias (1372 ff.) and the quintessential Athenian, an informer (1410 ff.; *Acharn.* 900 ff.). Lyrics on exotic lands harboring Orestes (1491), Socrates (1555) and Philip (1701) mock Athenians' ability to be everywhere even while still remaining in Athens.

85 For the early equal balance of the protagonists see the differences in line distribution. Dunbar, as Henderson's Loeb and Halliwell, 1997, give the first line and 27–48 to Euelpides and 13–22 to Peisetairos; Sommerstein gives all three to Peisetairos; Arrowsmith, 1961 to Euelpides; MacDowell, 1995, 201–202; Dunbar, *Birds*, 108; Russo, 1994, 37–43.

86 See Pericles on Athenians as easygoing (2.37) and expecting participation (2.40); Athens's horror of tyranny (as *Wasps* 486–489) and willingness to be a tyrant; need for and fear of

own walls rose nearly as swiftly as those of the bird-city (Thuc. 1.93), and the extraordinary emergence of Cloudcuckooton recalls Alcibiades' plans for world domination (Thuc. 6.90), envisioned less than sixty years after the nascent Athenian empire referred to in the *Persians*.[87] Taking the *Birds* as a comment on the Sicilian Expedition, it seems possible that Aristophanes meant his audience to see not that what was before them was good or bad, but rather (like the *demos* being shown itself in *Knights*) to see that what was before them, in all its inconsistency, *hybris*, glory, and absurdity, was themselves.[88]

But while the *Birds* has a direct reference to Athens, it also concerns the ambivalence of human ambition in a broader sense, a view in which human beings seek beyond the human, only to find that their search lands them back on their own doorstep. Just as, in *Peace*, Trugaios plumbs the mind of Zeus only to find that we ourselves are the ultimate cause of war, in *Birds* human busyness (in Greek, *polypragmosyne*) takes over everything it can reach, prompted by the very same human beings' desire for peace and quiet (as 44, 471, 1320–1329).[89] This view once more inverts that of tragedy. In the *Persians* Aeschylus reveals, in Athens's immediate past, how human ambition and *hybris* brought about what Aeschylus called the "violent grace" (*Agam.* 182) of Zeus. In Sophocles'

ambition (Osborne, 36 and Friedrich, 219–239, both in Sommerstein et al, and in tragedy, Meier, 1993, 133–134 and *passim*). Peisetairos' ethical grounds are similarly inconsistent, as Dunbar, *Birds*, 8–9; Henderson (in Dobrov, 1997, 135–148) on Peisetairos as a disillusioned aristocrat makes the tension even more pointed.

87 Russo, 1994, 152 for Cloudcuckooton; Meier, 1993, 33–34 on Athens, citing a fragment of Platon that a man away from Athens for three months wouldn't know his way around when he returned. An Athenian who was sixty when the Delian treasury came to Athens could remember the Pisistratids; Sophocles was five when Marathon occurred. In contrast, Sparta had the same laws for four hundred years (Thuc. 1.18).

88 See Konstan, 1990, 204 and in Dobrov, 1997, 17: "It [Cloudcuckooton] is a complex image of Athens's own contradictions, its communal solidarity and its political and social divisions, the conservatism that looked to the image of an ancestral constitution, and an imperial will to power"; Henderson in Dobrov, 136–137 in regard to Sicily: "Like the Assembly debaters of 415, *Birds* was designed to evoke responses to a grandiose vision of Athens that were at once contradictory and equally compelling." For comedy (and tragedy) as showing the city to itself, Dobrov in Dobrov, 1995, 88–89; Goldhill, 1991, 185–186; Vernant in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 33.

89 Dunbar, *Birds*, 5 points out, with a certain understatement, that the "peace and quiet" (*hesychia* 1320–1322) is compromised by the aim of blockading Olympus; Reckford, 1987, 332–333 and for the movement from *apragmosyne* to *polypragmosyne*; Rothwell, 2007, 180–181; Whitman, 1951, 143 as a "dialectical kind of comedy, whereby dream defeats itself while achieving itself"; Henderson, 1991a, 86; Sommerstein, *Birds*, 227; L.B. Carter, 1986 on *apragmosyne*.

Tereus, a play that *Birds* pointedly recalls (100–101), when the human moves beyond human limits it is transformed into the bestial. Comedy, in contrast, moves beyond the human only to transform the nonhuman into its own likeness. Unlike Sophocles' tragic hero, the comic Tereus brings to his nonhuman world pea soup (70–79), the knowledge of Greek (199–200), and a very human annoyance at the indignities Sophocles subjected him to (100–101).[90]

Above all, however, *Birds* emphasizes the ambivalence of human ambition by depicting a search that destroys exactly the golden age it intended to find. The play's references to Porphyrion and Phlegra recall the attack of the Giants on the Olympians and their threat to order, while the references to the *Theogony* (469–470, 693–696) and Prometheus (as *PB* 201ff.) associate Peisetairos with the succession myth and the consequent end of the golden age.[91] Moreover, by employing the usual tendency of the comic chorus to fade into the background, Aristophanes makes the movement away from golden age harmony seem not only seamless, but also inevitable.[92] As the play progresses and the birds' cause, increasingly entrusted to Peisetairos, flourishes, both the birds' originally vivid identity and their carefree world gradually disappear (155–161). The wonder at the chorus's costumes, elaborately presented and apparently individuated, the elaborate play on birdsong, and the sense of a strange and wonderful existence outside of human ken all belong to the first half of the play, revived only once, as a brief reminder, in the play's second *parabasis*.[93] In the second half of the play, the identity of the chorus, their centrality to the story, and the recollections of the golden age have all faded and the human has taken over.

It is the ambivalence that Aristophanes highlights. By bringing Cloudcuckooton closer and closer to Athens, and Peisetairos closer and closer to godhead, the *Birds* might seem simply to condemn Athenian *hybris*, with a specific

90 Tereus' Athenian associations (368) were reinforced by the Procne statue on the Acropolis (Pausanias 1.24.3; Dunbar, *Birds*, 9; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 167). For Sophocles' *Tereus*, Dobrov, 2001, 110–117; Kiso, 1984, 51–86; Fitzpatrick, 2001; for the importance of Tereus to *Birds*, DeLuca in Mhire and Frost.

91 Dunbar, *Birds*, 12: "arguably the main source of the plot"; Hofmann, 1976, 79–90; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 161–162, and for the *hieros gamos*, 163–165. For Porphyrion and Phlegra 553, 824–824, 1251–1252; the Scholiast to 553; Pindar, P. 18. 17; Dunbar, *Birds*, 7–8, 226–227, 257–258; Hypothesis II 28–31 (Dunbar, *Birds*, 34–35).

92 See Chapter One, section two for the chorus's lesser importance in the second half of Aristophanes' comedies.

93 L.P.E. Parker, 1997, 297, 302–303 on the imitation of birdsong, ending, aside from the brief reminders 1191–1265, 1720–1723, at 897–899.

application to Sicily.[94] Similarly, the loss of the golden age that emerges from Peisetairos' quest might seem to parallel Aeschylus' warning against excessive ambition, or Hesiod's moral that "the half is greater than the whole" (*WD* 40). Such a reading, however, ignores the enormous emotional charge of Peisetairos' final celebratory procession. As with the victorious exits of Dikaiopolis, Philocleon, or the sausage seller, Aristophanes specialized in combining exuberant celebration and rueful laughter. Neither element can be neglected. The *Birds* is about the inherent insanity, and even the self-defeating insanity, of human ambition, but it is also a glorification of the drive and ingenuity such an ambition produces.

While the *Birds* is about Athens, and about human ambition, it is also about the human relation to the divine. Here again what Aristophanes brings out are the self-contradictons. The emotional charge of the *Birds*' finale lies in Peisetairos' conquest, but its humor lies in the fact that that conquest, a defeat of the gods, is by definition impossible. If they are gods they cannot be defeated, and if they can be defeated they were not gods in the first place. This absurdity, I would argue, is the point. In tragedy a human being like Xerxes, who is drawn to challenge the divine, is doomed to fail. In comedy the human triumphs, but this is because we defy a divine that we have invented for ourselves.

Both the anthropomorphism of the gods in *Birds*, and with it the suggestion that the divine is finally dependent on the human, are further emphasized by a contrast with the birds themselves. The birds' last claim to godhead, which occurs in the second *parabasis*, stresses, comically, their role in nature:

> From hence it is to me, all-seeing
>   and all-ruling, that every mortal
>   now shall sacrifice with prayerful prayers.
> For all the earth do I survey
>   and save the flourishing fruits,

94 As in Iris' charge of *hybris* at 1259; Arrowsmith, 1973, overall and 155 on the play as a *reductio ad absurdum*. Sommerstein's defense regarding *Wealth* (1984, 325): "Treason against the gods, like treason against one's sovereign or country, is only punishable if it fails" may be true, but is not exactly pious. The closing description of Peisetairos as "highest among the gods (*daimones*)" (1765) also undermines Dunbar on Peisetairos limiting himself by taking Zeus' thunderbolt, not his scepter (*Birds*, 13–14, 529). Similarly, despite her claim that Peisetairos is now himself a bird and so does not dominate (*Birds* 3, 12, 337), he is in general seen as human (615, 1581, 1728). Even at 833 Sommerstein argues (*Birds*, 252–253), "one of us" should read rather "one of you."

slaying the brood of every tribe of bug …
and all that creeps and all that bites, whatever
  is beneath my wing,
  in slaughter perishes.
    1058–1064, 1069–1071

This claim is paired with an antistrophe that evokes the golden age for the last time in the play:

O happy brood of winged
  birds, who in winter
  are not wrapped round with cloaks;
neither in summer do the long stifling
  rays inflame us;
but in the flowery meadows'
  bosom amidst the leaves I dwell …
    1088–1093

The natural harmony invoked here recalls the world lost through Peisetairos' ambition. It also sets in stark relief the very human gods who are about to enter.

In contrast to the birds, particularly in the elaborate choral entry where their "otherness" was stressed, the gods who visit Peisetairos after the second *parabasis* are pointedly anthropomorphic. It is a tendency that grows on them. In the case of Iris, the humor of the scene lies in the mismatch between her tragic "divine" style (as, pointedly, 1238–1243) and Peisetairos' comic insouciance. Prometheus, who seems to know that the play is a comedy, reenacts his divine benevolence only to have it appear, now that it is translated into human terms, as the action of a sneak and a coward.[95] In the divine embassy the joke has gone even further. The gods are now completely trapped in their anthropomorphic personas, Hercules as a dolt and a glutton (as *Peace* 741, *Frogs* 62 ff.), the "barbarian god" as crude and uncivilized, and Poseidon as a stuffy aristocrat.[96] The self-importance that in Iris reminded us of the "real" gods becomes in Poseidon simply caricature. As in the warning that if his father gives away his kingdom,

95 See Rau, 1967, 175–177 on the parody and the similar treatment of Hermes at *Peace* 416–430, *Wealth* 1100–1170; Stone, 1981, 330 on Prometheus' opening Aeschylean silence; MacDowell, 1995, 220: "The fun here arises from speaking of the gods as if they were ordinary human beings, and Athenians at that."

96 Katz, 1976 takes this literally, seeing Poseidon as Nicias, the Triballian as Alcibiades, and Heracles as Lamachus.

Heracles will inherit nothing after Zeus' death (!) (1641–1645), nothing really distinguishes these gods from human beings. Given the free-for-all, it is natural that, when his hero needs a divine consort to clinch his sovereignty, Aristophanes simply invents one.[97]

A tendency to collapse the gap between the divine and the human seems to be usual in Old Comedy. In at least three different plays, Cratinus cast Pericles as Zeus.[98] Other comic references to the divine follow suit: Eupolis' *Demes* brought generals up from Hades to advise Athens; his *Commanders* cast Dionysus as an inept sailor under the command of Phormio, and Pherecrates' *Cheiron* presented the Muse lamenting her abuse at the hands of the new music (fr. 155). Similarly, throughout the *Birds*, Aristophanes' humor comes from the pretense that human categories can be applied to the divine. Iris, despite being immortal, is threatened with death; Prometheus is "an out-and-out Timon" in his hatred of his fellow gods (1549); Poseidon laments the kind of ambassadors the divine democracy digs up (1571–1572); the civilized gods have barbarian gods to contend with (1520 ff., as *Peace* 406–408), and the gods' sovereignty comprises not only the possession of good-counsel and moderation, but also, as we saw before, such necessities as dockyards, mudslinging, and the three-obol jury payment (1538–1541).[99]

Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* ends with the famous line: "There is nothing of this that is not Zeus" (1278).[100] The *Peace* and the *Birds*, although they too focus on the gods, could end with a rather different version: there is nothing of this that is not man. As Peisetairos comes closer and closer to supremacy, Aristophanes' gods come closer and closer to being simple parodies of human beings, hinting that human beings are able to conquer the gods largely because we created them. But even this would not be entirely right, since there is no reason for the conquest, and no humor in it, unless the gods are real. The submission

97 Sommerstein translates as "Princess," distinguishing "Basileia" (with a short final alpha) from "Sovereignty," with a long final alpha. For Aristophanes' invention of the goddess see Sommerstein, *Birds*, 298; Dunbar, *Birds*, 480; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 164; Newiger, 1957, 92–102.

98 *Thracian Women* 73, *Nemesis*, *Wealth-gods*; Bakola, 2010, 213–220, 220–224; Rusten, 2011, 190, 199.

99 Similarly, Amphitheos has a divine mandate but no travel money (*Acharn.* 50–53); the Thracian god, Sabazius, is expelled from Athens and foreign gods are tried on *xenia* charges (*Seasons* 577–589; Cicero, *De Legibus* 2.37); Hermes needs sacrifices to eat (*Wealth* 1114 ff.); and is bribed with a golden bowl to use for libations (to the gods?) (*Peace* 200–202, 423–424).

100 For Sophocles' tendency to set his heroes against the divine, C. Segal, 1995, 150; Kiso, 1984, 9–10.

of Dagon to YHWH (1 Samuel 5.1–12) is not meant to be funny (although it has its humorous moments) because Dagon is not God. The submission of Zeus to Peisetairos is funny because Zeus is.

Aristophanes, in other words, is doing more than merely repeating the idea of Xenophanes or the *Sisyphus* fragment, that human beings create the gods. He is pointing to an even greater ambivalence and absurdity in human beings, our ability to know that we have created the gods and still to believe in them. Or, on the flip side, just as we can see our lives as part of an order beyond human understanding, and then try to understand it, exactly the recognition that a force is unconquerable makes human beings want to challenge it.

In *Birds*, this can be summed up in the idea that human beings require the divine to achieve anything—particularly a conquest of the gods. Thus the birds agree to "justly, purely, holily attack the gods" (630–634) and celebrate Peisetairos' conquest by likening him to Zeus (1731 ff.), whom he has just overcome.[101] Similarly, behind the joke of Peisetairos' scrawny sacrifice lies the question: since the birds themselves are gods, who are they sacrificing to? (898–900, etc.).[102] The difficulty with being "the measure of all things" is that it leaves you no one to turn to. So, in the *Clouds*, characters who declare that the gods do not exist swear by them anyway (652, 665, 773, 1000, 1331), and in *Birds*, Iris' and Peisetairos' competing oaths "by Zeus" (1210, 1216, 1220), like Poseidon's "By Poseidon!" (1614) reach their logical culmination in Peisetairos' emphatic: "birds are now the gods for human beings, / and they must sacrifice to them and not, by Zeus, to Zeus!" (1237).[103]

Aristophanes' plays about the divine are entrancing because they allow us to revel in a fantasy of unrestricted freedom and unlimited power. But while we enjoy the fantasy, Aristophanes reminds us that it is a fantasy, and a self-contradictory one at that. His point is not that tragedy, with its image of a divine nexus binding in human action, is right. Nor is it that tragedy is wrong. It is rather that both of the facts that become most evident in wartime, that human

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101 At 1752 the manuscript's *dia se*, referring to Zeus' thunderbolt and using a religious formula is preferable to Haupt's *Dia de*, as Dunbar, *Birds*, 524–525. Sommerstein's objections (*Birds* 310–311) to the switch from plural to singular and from Princess to the thunderbolt look for an unnecessary degree of consistency.

102 The birds propose "the gods" (851 ff.) and "the blessed ones" (899), Peisetairos "the new gods" (866) and "the winged gods" (903), skirting the problem that "the winged gods" are also the ones making the sacrifice.

103 Fletcher, 2012, 164, 246–248 for the *Clouds* and *Birds*. The vagueness in swearing is due not to "prudent reluctance" (Dunbar, *Birds*, 11) but to the nature of the conquest. For Protagoras' "man is the measure" see Plato, *Theaetetus* 151e; Dillon and Gergel, 9–21.

beings are bound by necessity, and that we strive for freedom and autonomy even when we know they are impossible, are elements of the human condition. As tragedy so often tells us, in comparison with the design of the gods, human life is no more than a shadow or the image of a dream.[104] What comedy points out is that since that shadow is all we have, we might as well get down to it. Or as Woody Allen put it: "Not only is there no God, but try getting a plumber on weekends."[105]

104 As *Ajax* 125–126; Garvie, *Ajax*, 136 citing Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 946, fr. 659.6; Aeschylus, *Agam.* 839, fr. 399, etc.; Heath, 1987c, 158 n. 74.

105 *Getting Even*, Random House, New York, 1978, p. 25 quoted in Silk, 1988, 28.

CHAPTER 7

Women at the Thesmophoria and *Frogs*: Aristophanes on Tragedy and Comedy

> A priest, a rabbi, a redneck, a blonde, and a dog all walk into a bar. The bartender looks up and says, "What is this, a joke?"

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1 Parody, Metatheater, and Dialogue

In her study of *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Froma Zeitlin makes the telling point that the play's tragic parodies fail as tragedy for precisely the same reason that they succeed as comedy: because they prove unable to draw their comic audience into their orbit.[1] This difference lies at the heart of comedy's use of self-reference. In tragedy, as in the "costuming" of Pentheus in the *Bacchae*, self-reference does not usually break the emotional grip of the play. In comedy, in a contrast we have seen reflected on comic and tragic vases,[2] the self-reference seems designed, as in the joke above, to point out that the dramatic reality the audience is engaged in is a fiction.[3]

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1 Failing "to deceive the comic audience inside the play with their mimetic credibility," Zeitlin, 1996, 387; Wright, 2012, 159; Muecke, 1977, 64 on the contrast of detachment and identification as reflecting that of comedy and tragedy; Hall, 2010, 95 as a sign of the comic characters' inferiority to the Athenian male citizens; Ruffell, 2011, 18, 214–260 on comedy's tendency to metatheater and so disruption.

2 Chapter Two, section one; J.R. Green, 1994, 26: "When [the painter] shows tragic actors as 'real,' it reflects the audience's view of the theatre performance"; D. Walsh, 2009, 149–156 for Dionysus as onlooker on comic vases.

3 Chapman, 1983 finds over a hundred Aristophanic uses of self-reference. Lowe in Redmond, 44: "Serious drama tends by nature to illusion, comic drama to collusion: the subversion of the distance between performer and spectator is not merely a powerful device for the abrupt introduction of incongruity, but a technique essentially disruptive of narrative tension by shifting the rules while the game is in progress"; Muecke, 1977, 7–14 arguing, against Sifakis, 1971. For Hegel on comedy, as self-reflexive, as the culmination of tragedy, and in Aristophanes and Euripides, Nichols, 1998, 136–137; Speight, 2001, 68–75.

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This difference, between an emotional draw in Greek tragedy and a tendency in comedy to observe itself observing, seems fundamental to the genres.[4] The contrast, and its connection to necessity on the one side and to freedom on the other, emerges even more strongly in a comparison of *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs*. Both plays treat the relation of tragedy and comedy; both, I argue, are finally more interested in how the genres are paired than in the superiority of either. Both also focus, but in interestingly different ways, on the emotional intensity of tragedy and the analytic, self-referential tendency of comedy.

In *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Aristophanes depicts tragedy as pulling everything around it into its emotional orbit, while comedy balances that tendency with its own more cynical perspective. In 405, however, in *Frogs*, another perspective emerges. In the growing uncertainty of the war's last months, the ambivalence of comedy could not provide the single-mindedness the city needed; for this, it seems, Athens needed the emotional intensity of tragedy. A play like *Women at the Thesmophoria* makes it clear that tragedy needs comedy for balance. In the *Frogs*, unusually, Aristophanes admits that comedy needs tragedy as well.

The different treatments also call forth two opposite ways of dealing with Euripides. In *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Aristophanes uses an unusual form of parody to essentially rewrite some of Euripides' most self-referential works, the escape dramas *Helen* and *Andromeda*, making them into "proper" tragedies in which there is no escape. Only when Euripides turns to cross-dressing and a standard Aristophanic sexy mute extra does the chorus agree (immediately) to his terms, allowing a scene of comic byplay to free the in-law from his plank.[5] In *Frogs*, in contrast, instead of "correcting" Euripides, Aristophanes denies him the Chair of Tragedy altogether, awarding it instead to Aeschylus. The essential contrast, however, remains the same. The huge emotional pull of Aeschylus' drama makes him the right kind of tragedian, while Euripides' verbal dexterity, individual focus, and sheer slipperiness (as 80–82) make his drama, when "uncorrected," unable to help Athens.

Both *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs* are usually seen as demonstrating the superiority of comedy to tragedy.[6] I argue here that what both plays

4 For the emotional intensity of tragedy and Gorgias' characterization of it as a kind of *apate*, Chapter Four, section four; Bain, 1987, 14 sees self-reference in tragedy using "theatricality without an obvious break in illusion."

5 Dobrov, 2001, 132; Zeitlin, 1996, 398, and see Chapter Two, section one for escape as a usual theme in satyr drama.

6 On the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Henderson 1996, 96: "comedy reveals its own superiority

explore is rather the necessary conjunction of the genres. In *Women at the Thesmophoria*, comedy is not so much superior to tragedy overall as it is superior to tragedy when it comes to escape. The feminization of tragedy, and the identification of comedy with the masculine, does give the dominant role to comedy, but the pervasive theme of marriage emphasizes not this, but rather that the genres are both opposite and complementary.[7] Similarly, the *Frogs*' resurrection of a tragic poet who can save Athens is usually seen as demonstrating the power of comedy to effect this change. I argue instead that the play not only shows us, once more, Euripides' inadequacy, but also the need for a properly tragic vision to complement the (to Aristophanes) quite obvious importance of comedy.

To the question that self-reference poses: "One reality or two?" comedy irresistibly urges: "Take two: they're small." It is precisely because of this tendency to juxtapose realities that comedy gives itself to both metatheater and parody. It is also for this reason that I have included dialogue in the group. Comedy's tendency to examine itself also enables it to set up an explicit and self-conscious dialogue with other genres. In Aristophanes the focus is overwhelmingly on tragedy.[8] While this is partially, no doubt, due simply to Aristophanes' particu-

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at depicting the real world"; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 220: "the play thus becomes a continuous demonstration in various spheres of the superiority of comedy as a dramatic form"; Zeitlin, 1996, 398 and for a different take, Gibert in Mastronarde, 1999–2000. On *Frogs*, Foley in Revermann and Wilson, 24–26; Dobrov, 1997, 155: "it is the Dionysus persona who, from the broadest perspective of *Frogs* as a contemporary performance, demonstrates comedy's ability to manipulate and surpass tragedy to provide a powerful remedy for the city's troubles"; Reckford, 1987, 436: "Euripides' death brings Dionysus to confront the world of death and corpses with Old Comic clowning, and to renew himself, and Aristophanes with him, at the deepest sources of the Old Comic spirit"; Hubbard, 1991, 218–219 sees the contest as between the "high" and "low" elements in Aristophanes himself and see Heiden, 1991.

7 A natural polarity and complementarity modeled by the marriage of male and female also appears in *Lysistrata*, probably produced the same year; Dillon, 1987a; Loraux, 1984, 153 n. 20, 158; Dover, 1972, 150, 160–161; Henderson 1991a, 94–95; Hubbard, 1991, 187 ff.; Whitman, 1964, 205; Newiger, 1975b, 185–192 for unity as the theme of *Lysistrata*; Stehle, 2002, 403 for the separation and reconciliation of men and women. As the composition of the plays must have overlapped considerably, the similarities seem natural. For *Lysistrata* in 411 and *WT* in 410, and for a significant political involvement in both, Samons, 2000, 318–322; Tsakmakis in Markantonatos and Zimmermann, 291–302.

8 For Aristophanic comedy defining itself against tragedy, Silk, 2000 and 1980, 134: "It is tragedy, above all, that supplies the comic poet's need for elevation in his lyrics: tragedy that provides most of the specific models for high parody and high pastiche alike; and tragedy that helps engender the new irregular compound as well" and for further references see Introduction, section three.

lar interests, it is also, as I have argued, a natural outgrowth of the way that the Athenian dramatic festivals juxtaposed the genres. But however we take this, what Aristophanes' self-reference allows us is a direct look at the polarity he sees existing between tragedy and comedy and, as I will argue, the importance of viewing the genres together.

The extent to which Athenian tragedy was willing to employ self-reference has been hotly contested.[9] There are quite evident cases, such as Euripides' mockery of the recognition scene in the *Oresteia* (*Electra* 524–546) or (in satyr drama) Odysseus' declaration in the *Cyclops* that what he has seen is more like a myth than real life (376). These lines are clearly meant to comment on the artificiality of the drama, and in so doing come close to comedy.[10] There are also more doubtful examples, such as readings that see tragedy moving outside the world of the drama by commenting directly on current political

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9 See Torrance, 2013, 268–282 for metapoetics in tragedy and satyr drama; C. Segal, 2001, 134: "nearly everything in the *Tyrannos* is also metatheatrical–that is, pervaded by a self-consciousness of the play as theatrical spectacle"; Edmunds, 1996, 39–83 on *Oedipus at Colonus*; Ringer, 1988 on metatheater throughout Sophocles. In contrast Mastronarde, 2010, 94: "Tragedy's overall respect for the closure of its stage world (for which the term "dramatic illusion" remains the most useful) is clearly distinct from the fluidity or openness to the audience of the stage world of Old Comedy"; Taplin, 1978 (later modified in Silk).

For other accounts, Lada-Richards in Goldhill and Hall, 48–49; Hall, 2006, 105–111; Henrichs, 1995 and Bain 1975, 1977, 1987 all concluding that tragedy generally avoids metatheater, as Scullion, 2002, 116: "My own conclusion is that there is no break of any kind in the dramatic illusion here, indeed none anywhere in the tragic texts, and that this issue reveals some interpretive pitfalls awaiting Dionysiac interpreters of tragedy." Bierl, 2009 distinguishes self-reference from metatheater, which "has to do with problematizing and reflective speech in the theater about the aesthetic phenomenon of the theater" (30) and sees even self-reference as far more prevalent in comedy (66). It is worth noting that the term "metatheater" was coined explicitly in contrast to tragedy (Abel, 1963).

10 Even Euripides' metatheater, which can become extreme, continues to have a meaning within the drama. See Roberts, 1987, 62–64 on the appeal for victory in *Orestes*, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* and *Phoenician Women* and 62 n. 40 against Bain and Taplin: "No one would claim that fifth-century tragedy does what fifth-century comedy does, but given that in general tragedy firmly maintains its own boundaries, Euripides' occasional forays are of particular interest." Otherwise, Wilamowitz, 1883, 241 on *Helen* 1056; Rutherford, 1982, 160 n. 69 on *Trojan Women* 1242–1245, answered by Taplin, 1986, 168; Goldhill, 1986, 244–264; Blondell et al., 69, 149 on *Medea*, 322–324 on *Iphigenia at Aulis*. For the *Bacchae*, Bierl, 1991, 177–218; C. Segal, 1997, 369–378; Foley, 1985, 224–234 and in Mossman, 342–368; Dobrov, 1997, 70–85. Eisner, 1979 and Arrowsmith, 1999, 205 point to Euripides' use of anachronism to "decontextualize" myth.

figures.[11] And in the middle are a series of examples, including the *Bacchae* and Orestes' elaborate account of his own death in Sophocles' *Electra*, that clearly reflect an interest in theatricality, but without the overt self-reference of comedy.

In all these cases (as with issues we have seen before, such as contemporary reference and consistency of characterization), comedy puts the question in perspective. Next to *Frogs*, where the characters open the play by discussing the best joke to begin with, even Euripides' metatheater is mild. The contrast also brings out the more important distinction of the way in which tragedy employs these techniques. As Henrichs concludes in his study of self-reference in tragic choruses: "Each time a tragic chorus emphasizes its own dancing, the tragedians go out of their way to incorporate the choral self-reference into the imaginary setting of the drama."[12] Like the chorus in the *Oedipus Tyrannos* ("If such deeds are held in honor / why then should I dance?" 895–896), or like Prospero ("the solemn temples, the great globe itself, / yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve / and, like this insubstantial pageant faded, / leave not a rack behind," *Tempest* 4.1, 153–156), the self-reference reminds us of a world outside of the drama, but does so in order to intensify the dramatic emotion, not to interrupt it. In other words, while comedy employs metatheater to create a sense of two conflicting realities, tragedy more often employs it to give depth, intensity, and resonance to the single reality of the tragic stage.

This is not to argue that the tragic depiction of reality is, in any way, either simple or monolithic. An audience's response to the Furies, Oedipus, Medea, or even Xerxes is bound to be deeply complex, and with a complexity, I would argue, that differs in different members of the audience. Similarly, in the case of the opposed viewpoints of Apollo and the Furies, of Phaedra and Hippolytus, or of Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, both visions are equally crucial to the play and are not reducible to any univocal, "correct" point of view. What the deeply complex reality of Greek tragedy tends not to include, however, is what is always there in Aristophanes: the reminder that the drama itself is only one reality out of many. In all of these cases the complexity of vision is accompanied by an intensity that would be undermined by a sudden reminder that these are, after all, only fictional creatures.

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11 See Chapter Three, section one.

12 Henrichs, 1995, 75; for a more metatheatrical view, Ringer, 1988, 87–90. Zuntz, 1955, 55–63; Stinton in Cropp et al., 88 and Bain, 1977, 209–212 also see tragedy as disinclined to break the illusion of the play; Wilson and Taplin, 169–180 point to "non-explicit" or "submerged" self-referentiality in the *Oresteia*.

Tragedy is composed of dialogue and exists through the juxtaposition of different points of view.[13] It also can (and often has) been described as "dialogic," in exploring the relation of its heroic and Homeric models to the contemporary city-state.[14] And it can hardly be accused of simplifying reality. In this sense Charles Platter's argument that, in Bakhtinian terms, tragedy is "monologic" and Aristophanic comedy "dialogic" may seem odd.[15] The terms, however, are useful in that they draw attention to comedy's particular tendency to juxtapose realities, both in the case of parody (in Aristophanes largely the juxtaposition of tragic and comic reality) and in metatheater (the juxtaposition of dramatic reality and the reality of the external world).[16] When Dikaiopolis refers to what "he" suffered at the hands of Cleon, when a chorus of wasps extols Aristophanes' comic subtlety, or when Euripides in the *Women at the Thesmophoria* becomes his own tragic hero, Perseus, two different realities informed by different conventions, probabilities, and dangers are made to collide. Although tragedy has a reference to comedy, as it has a reference to the contemporary world, it does not, as comedy does, bring its counterpart onto the stage for an interview.

13 Gentili in Lowell and Wallace, 125 points to the simple fact of dialogue giving tragedy a multiplicity of viewpoints, as Plato at *Laws* 719c5–d1. In Easterling, 1997 see Burian, 182 for tragedy as "quintessentially dialogic"; Cartledge, 3–35 for "a productively dialectical relationship between Athenian drama and law court procedure"; Hall, 118–124 on tragedy as "polyphonic"; Dobrov, 2001, 157–158 on tragedy and comedy both engaging the body politic in dialogue.

14 Easterling, 1985; Foley, 2001, 1: "in part through deploying deliberate anachronisms or overlapping features of the fictional past and the lived present, the tragedies provoke an implicit dialogue between present and past." For Homer and tragedy, Chapter One n. 36.

15 Platter, 2006 and 1993, in particular, 210–211 on the dialogic relation of original and parody; Rusten in Fontaine and Scafuro, 46–47; Slater, 2002, 180 on *Women at the Thesmophoria* and comedy's concern, against tragedy, that democracy hear all voices; Nightingale, 1995, 191–192, with links to Bakhtin, on Plato's "polyphony" stemming from comedy rather than tragedy; Dobrov in Dobrov, 1995, 47–97 contrasts New Comedy to Old Comedy's polyphony and dialogue with tragedy.

16 Platter, 1993, 209: "Despite the fact that genres like the epic, essay, and declamation have dialogism built into them because of the nature of language itself, they do not acknowledge it. For this reason such genres are most easily parodied by others with a more highly developed dialogic consciousness"; Morson, 1989, quoted in Platter (1993, 210): "The parodist typically reveals the historical or personal circumstance that led someone to make or entertain a claim of transhistoricity. Parody historicizes, and in so doing it exposes the conditions that engendered claims of unconditionality."

I have argued throughout that comedy and tragedy influenced each other during the fifth century. Nor was Aristophanes alone in bringing tragedy explicitly into his plays.[17] From the pervasive use of tragic diction to the apparent tragic parodies of plays such as Cratinus' *Eumenides*, Hermippus' *Agamemnon*, Alcaeus' *Komodotragodia*, Phrynichus' *Tragedians*, Strattis' *Kallipides* (with its use of "*paratragodia*"), or his *Macedonians* or *Pausanias*, the comic fragments and the surviving depictions of comedy indicate that Old Comedy generally employed both a juxtaposition of realities and a specific juxtaposition of its own reality to that of tragedy. One reason for this, again, is that the festivals juxtaposed the two genres, priming the audience for tragic parody. Another is that tragedy's intensity makes comedy all the funnier. Like the bride's younger brother dressed up in her veil at the wedding reception, comedy loves a solemn backdrop.

As we will see, both *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs* put a tragic backdrop to yet another use, one that also appears in Cratinus' *Dionyalexandros*, *Nemesis*, and *Wealth-gods*, all of which seem to have made a sustained use of tragedy. In both plays Aristophanes uses tragic necessity to frame the play and then, as we have seen elsewhere, inverts it, emphasizing the ease of the final rescue. In the *Frogs*, the necessity is that of Hades, which (in comedy) cheerfully offers to send someone back from the dead; in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, the in-law's entrapment is resolved, after three hundred lines of tragic parody, in a single comic exchange with the chorus leader (1160–1170). In both cases what the easiness brings out is also the comic point, which is that the necessity turns out to be one not imposed from outside, but created by the heroes themselves.[18] In the case of *Women at the Thesmophoria*, this is literally the case, since Euripides himself is the author of the plays with which, and from which, he attempts to free his in-law.

17 Wright, 2012, 171: "On the evidence of the comic fragments, it will be absolutely clear by now that Aristophanes was not unique, at least not in the range of his interests. His poetics, his subject matter, his jokes, his attitude to festivals and literary prizes, his dialogue with tragedy and other genres, his metatheatricality, his use of parody and intertextuality, his preoccupation with Euripides—all of these features are paralleled in the works of his fellow tragedians" and see the Introduction, section three.

18 As also in "Euripides" originating the scheme and the in-law volunteering in *Women at the Thesmophoria*, and in Dionysus' insistence on venturing into Hades in *Frogs*.

2 *Women at the Thesmophoria*: Comedy and Tragedy Talk

O suitably-attired-in-leather-boots
Head of a traveler, wherefore seeking whom
Whence by what way how purposed art thou come
To this well-nightingaled vicinity?
My object in inquiring is to know.

A.E. HOUSMAN

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As we have observed throughout this study, the qualities that Aristophanes tends to mock in Euripides—his ragged heroes, cynical view of morality and the gods, inclusion of the lowborn, and sophistic play with language—are all elements of drama that he himself uses and that he associates with comedy. The first half of the *Women at the Thesmophoria* makes this point repeatedly, as the main focus of the humor is that Euripides is condemned for portraying women as promiscuous, deceptive, wine-guzzlers—exactly the portrayal of women that Aristophanes is currently engaged in.[19]

What is surprising about the *Women at the Thesmophoria* is not this, but rather that in the second half of the play, where Aristophanes indulges himself in three rapid-fire parodies of Euripidean tragedy, none of these elements arise.[20] What we expect of parody is that, as in the *Telephus* parody in the

19 Henderson, 1996, 97: "Euripides had never revealed even the smallest fraction of what the wives were *really* up to. Revelation of *those* secrets is after all the prerogative not of effeminate tragic illusion but of manly comic satire"; Loraux in Bremer and Handley, 238: "A la limite, le comique n'attribute à la tragédie euripidéenne ce qui est de son propre ressort que pour mieux garder les frontières de la comédie là où elles sont le plus poreuses"; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 217: "As the women of the festival have moved into male areas, so Euripides has not only infiltrated a woman's rite, but will also be shown to have transgressed in his tragedies over two further boundaries: first, that between tragedy and comedy, and second (and complementary to the first), that between what is and is not appropriate subject matter for tragedy" and see Austin and Olson, *WT*, lxvii. Henderson, 1996, 90–91 points out as well the positive stereotype of women conveyed by Lysistrata, as opposed to the negative stereotype of the *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

20 Although, for convenience, I speak of the "first" and "second half" of the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, Aristophanes, unusually, continues the *Palamedes* scene across the *parabasis*, creating an "infiltration" of parody like that of the *Telephus*, as seen in the following discussion.

Acharnians, where Dikaiopolis as Telephus literally "puts his head on the block," the humor arises in exaggerating and making visible the incongruities that tragedy keeps under wraps.[21] This, for example, is how the Housman parody at the head of this section operates. But, as we noted at the beginning of the chapter, in the parodies of the *Helen* and *Andromeda*, the "tragedy" is played straight, and the humor comes from the refusal of Aristophanes' comic characters to buy into the "serious" scene. As we will see, the contrast is the point.

The unusual nature of the *Helen* and *Andromeda* parodies is made emphatic by the contrast to the first half of the play, which gives us a rundown of Aristophanes' usual complaints about Euripides: his sophistry (5 ff.), more notorious lines (194, 275–276), clever devices (93–94, 198), and atheism (272 ff., 450 ff.). It also gives us one of Aristophanes' usual parodies, exposing the absurdity of tragedy by transforming Telephus' defense speech into a catalog of female misconduct, the "unmasking" into a search for the in-law's phallus, and the hostage into a wineskin. In contrast, the parodies of the second half (with allowances for some paratragic bombast, and the contrasting metatheater of the Echo scene) involve proper tragic heroines, purged not only of the comic exaggeration of the *Telephus* parody, but even of their original Euripidean peculiarities. The *Andromeda* parody is harder to judge since the original is lost, but Austin and Olson's view of the *Andromeda* as "a complex tale of argument and intrigue" reduced "to something strikingly reminiscent of the truncated version of *Helen* that precedes it: a beautiful, chaste, and submissive woman … rescued by a male hero" rings true.[22]

This is certainly the case in the *Helen*, where we can compare the parody to the original, as Aristophanes must have intended (particularly in choosing for his parody two plays performed in the previous year). The most obvious contrast is that the tragedy now allows for no escape.[23] As Euripides and his in-law seek increasingly "tragic" solutions to the in-law's entrapment, running, seriatim, through the *Telephus* of 438, the *Palamedes* of 415, and the *Helen* and *Andromeda* produced together in 412, the in-law only becomes increasingly confined.[24] But escape is not the only non-tragic element that Aristo-

21 See Goldhill, 1991, 209 on parody drawing attention to strategies meant to be unseen; Dobrov, 1997, 157–158 on tragedy hiding intertextuality while comedy exposes it.

22 Austin and Olson, *WT*, lxiii.

23 Rau, 1967, 50 and in Newiger, 1975, 349. Taplin in Silk, 196–199 sees the *WT* protesting Euripides' happy endings, for which Dunn, 1996, 65–69; Wright, 1995; see Chapter Two, section two for Euripides' "escape" plays as satyric.

24 For the *Telephus* and *WT*, Miller, 1948 and Chapter Three, section three. For the *Palamedes* and *Andromeda*, Webster, 1967b, 174–177, 192–199; Collard et al., *Euripides*, 2.92–103 and

phanes has eliminated. Helen's doubts about her mythic origin (*Helen* 16–21), Teucer's amazement at the "stranger" who so closely resembles Helen (68–163), Menelaus' preferring illusion to a reality that renders ten years of war meaningless (571–596), and even the shadowy image or *eidolon* that replaced Helen in Troy (41–55, 597–621) are also gone.[25] Not only does Aristophanes not bring up his usual complaints about Euripides (aside from a possible, and no doubt irresistible, swipe at Menelaus' rags), he removes all the elements that have led critics to see the *Helen* as a play that questions the difference between appearance and reality.[26]

Just as the *Acharnians* uses Lamachus to attack the war, and as *Clouds* mocks both Socrates in particular and, through him, sophistry and rhetoric in general, the *Women at the Thesmophoria* takes both Euripides and tragedy as its subject. The double approach, however, is more complicated than it seems, since what

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133–168; Rau, 1967, 51–53 for the *Palamedes* parody; 53–69 for *Helen*; 65–89 for *Andromeda*. Dobrov, 2001, 126–132 sees *Helen* as Euripides' response to *Birds*, and WT as Aristophanes' to *Helen*; Zeitlin, 1996, 387 points out the chronological sequence (as does WT 846–850) and the increasing extremity of the parodies (379).

25 Aristophanes thus writes out the reason for Helen being in Egypt in the first place, despite his focus on the locale, as Wright, 2012, 156–162; Austin and Olson, WT, lxi; Gibert in Mastronarde, 1999–2000 on the rewriting of *eros*; for Russo, 1994, 193 Aristophanes "decomposes and then parodically recomposes the scenic and expressive forms of Euripidean theater"; Revermann, 2006b, 116 for Aristophanes "flattening Euripidean complexities": "A play on the mismatch of appearance and reality, othemess and the limits of human intelligibility, *Helen* is dissected and transformed into a farce of swift recognition (899–911) before an uncomprehending female guardian, followed by an aborted rescue attempt"; Lowe, 2008, 47 for the WT's *"Helen"* as a play "whose text has been taken apart … and reassembled in comically reduced form." Rau in Newiger, 1975 takes these features as dropping out, while Zeitlin, 1996, 394 sees the *eidolon* as hovering over the scene.

26 Thumiger, 2013, 230; Burnett, 1971, 76–100: "Euripides, in the *Helen*, is not simply dancing on the grave of the genre he has outraged, but looking for a new mode of expression for another kind of thought" (85); Wright, 2005, 154: "[Myth] is problematized; it is made to seem remarkable, illogical, irrational, unreal"; Dunn, 1996, 155: like Gorgias *"Helen* dramatizes a similar profound skepticism, suggesting that the order we take for granted may not exist, that if there is an order in the world we cannot apprehend it—and that even if it can be apprehended, drama is somehow unable to express it"; W.G. Arnott, 1990; Meltzer, 1994 and 2006, 188–222; C. Segal, 1971; Solmsen, 1934b linked to the Sophists' divorce of word and reality. Opposed, see Dale, *Helen*, vii–xvii and xvi: "it is surely hardly justified to claim as critics sometimes do that the *Helen* gains in profundity or qualifies as 'tragic' (in our sense) because it concerns the interplay of illusion and reality. … [T]here is no metaphysical or psychological depth here, nor would anything of the kind be either conceivable or appropriate"; Podlecki, 1970, 410–411 arguing against Post, 1964, 104.

is wrong with Euripides, in Aristophanes' comedies, is that he is not a proper tragedian. The solution is a new form of parody: in order to ridicule Euripides and tragedy at the same time, Aristophanes makes Euripides' plays into proper tragedies for him, and then lets his comic characters regard the results.

2.1 *The Marriage of Comedy and Tragedy: Gender and Genre, Once More, with Feeling*

Before he gets to "correcting" Euripides' plays, however, Aristophanes uses motifs of gender, ritual, and marriage to establish an overall context for his juxtaposition of the "tragic" and the comic. Along with marking comedy as masculine, tragedy as feminine, and marriage as the underlying motif, the play uses Demeter and Persephone and a standard ritual pattern to consider the relation of the genres.[27] The pattern is a common one in both initiation and rite of passage rituals, and involves separation, in Persephone's rape by Pluto; liminality and a confusion of categories, in Demeter's search for her daughter; and finally restoration, in the instantiation of Persephone's marriage in the cycle of the seasons.[28] Here it is played out through both gender and genre. In gender, the festival separates men and women, gender roles are confused, and the norm is then reestablished in the return of both the in-law and the chorus to their respective marriages (1206, 1227–1228).[29] In genre, the separation occurs

27 On the Thesmophoria, Austin and Olson, *WT*, xlv–li; Parke, 1977, 82–88; Brumfield, 1981, 70–103 and for a "corrective" view, Sommerstein, "Adolescence, ephebeia, and Athenian drama" in Sommerstein, 2010.

28 Griffith, 2013, 195: "almost any ritual … can be found to involve some kind of "initiatory" experience, a "liminal" space or state … and finally a transition to a new or renewed state of reintegration with and of community"—which is probably as specific as Aristophanes cares to get. For the pattern, Van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969 and 1974 for liminality and *communitas*; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 12 for gender and status inversion; 226 for the Thesmophoria's "period of abnormality and reversal"; 45–52 for *Knights*, *Clouds* and *Wasps*. For the pattern in tragedy, Vidal-Naquet in Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 161–180 on the *Philoctetes*; Zeitlin, 1996, 93–107 on the *Oresteia*. Turner, 1969, 303 turns the comparison around: "If the liminality of life-crisis rites may be, perhaps audaciously, compared to tragedy—for both imply humbling, stripping, and pain—the liminality of status reversal may be compared to comedy, for both involve mockery and inversion, but not destruction, of structural rules and overzealous adherents to them."

29 For the Thesmophoria restricted to married women, as 605 ff., where the women are identified by their husbands, Taaffe, 1993, 75; Austin and Olson, *WT*, xlvii; Brumfield, 1981, 86–87 who disagrees. Foley, 1992 and 2001, 308 describes "[t]he similarities in the plots of *Helen, Alcestis, Iphigenia among the Taurians*, and the Kore myth"; Bobrick in Dobrov, 185 sees a subversion of the Thesmophoria: "Actors in ritual drama (Thesmophorians)

when the tragedians Agathon and Euripides are left outside while the in-law infiltrates the comic environment of the Thesmophoria; the categories of comedy and tragedy are confused through the *Telephus* parody, and then finally restored as Aristophanes returns both comedy and "tragedy" to their proper forms and Euripides agrees to give up his slander of women.

The first sign of the *Women at the Thesmophoria*'s use of gender is the play's increasingly exclusive focus on Euripides' depiction of women. Comedy is established as male and tragedy as female with the hyper-masculine comic in-law and the effeminate tragedian Agathon (noting also Euripides' comment: "I was like that too when I was young," 173–174).[30] Although Aristophanes opened with his usual picture of Euripides' sophistry and dubious gods, these are largely dropped after the first scene.[31] Instead gender and gender slippage take over, pervasively linked to costume, as in Euripides' initial: "There we are; this gentleman is now a lady—to look at, anyway" (*aner men hēmin houtosi kai de gune / to g' eidos*, 266–267, Sommerstein trans.).[32] This continues with a confusion of gender-linked objects and an ongoing continual confusion of grammatical gender.[33] The slippage applies to genre as well, as we move from

have their script changed; a story of female rescue of female (Persephone and Demeter) is transformed to male rescue of female. The importance of the mother-daughter blood relationship is transferred to the marriage bond between man and woman (Menelaus-Helen, Perseus-Andromeda)."

30 Henderson 1996, 96–97: "Alongside the Kinsman's plain language, forthright honesty, conventional attitudes and sheer masculinity—in short, his comic manhood—the language, characters and plot-contrivances of Euripidean tragedy are constantly exposed as precious and artificial, pale imitations of true feminine artificiality" and similarly Whitman, 1951, 216–227. This would be reinforced if, as Stehle, 2002, 379 suggests, the "tragic" Agathon has no phallus; see Taaffe, 1993, 102 for the qualification that comedy needs the female as well; Zeitlin, 1996, 377 on the play using "the notion of gender as a way of posing questions about genre, drawing attention to the problematics of imitation and representation that connect transvestism of costume with mimetic parody of texts."

31 To the extent that Euripides swears by a conventional (if appropriate) "Hermes the deceiver" (1202) rather than the newfangled gods of *WT* 272, *Frogs* 892–894 etc.; see Platter, 2006, 163–164 on the unusual picture as due to the focus on comic and tragic mimesis. The important exception of Euripides' *mechanai* or "clever devices" (87, 927, 1132) introduce the second half, particularly the *mechane* that brings in Perseus (Sommerstein, *WT*, 229). Austin and Olson, *WT*, 326 see the Scythian's failure to comment as implying that Perseus is on foot, but there is also no comment on the costume (Austin and Olson, *WT*, 326).

32 See Chapter One, section two on costume, and, on 266–267, Denniston, 1954, 251 for *kai de* as completion required by circumstances; Slater, 2002, 159 translates: "This one's a man to us but again a woman in appearance."

33 As in Agathon's "lute, mother of songs, famed for its male cry" (124–125); the in-law's

the comic male in-law and the tragic "female" Agathon to the "real" women, identified by their comic vices, exposing the "female" comic in-law, to the in-law playing first the tragic male roles of Telephus and Palamedes, then the tragic female roles of Helen and Andromeda, including the singing of feminine lyrics that recollect Agathon's entry song.[34] Eventually the tragic Euripides will himself adopt comic feminine attire as "Artemisia" (1200) (a reference presumably to Xerxes' comment on the real Artemisia: "My men have become women and my women men," Herod. 8.88).[35] The elaborate series of tragic and comic pairings—tragic female and male (Helen and Menelaus / Andromeda and Perseus), comic and tragic female (Critylla and "Helen"), comic and tragic male (Scythian archer and "Perseus"), and finally the comic pairs Fawn/Woodworm and the archer/"Artemisia"—reinforce the confusion.

The third stage of the *Women at the Thesmophoria* restores the distinctions of male and female, and comedy and tragedy, under the auspices of marriage, the city, and the City Dionysia. The marriage theme appears most clearly in a pointed, although seldom commented on, discontinuity.[36] Despite Mica's charge that Euripides depicts only women's vice or *poneria*, and never a *sophron* or moderate woman like Penelope (546–548), the plays that Aristophanes chooses to parody explicitly showcase moderate women, with the *Helen*, in particular, rescuing the reputation of the most ill-famed of women, describing its heroine as "the best and most *sophron* of women" (*Helen* 1684) and modeling her, quite explicitly, on Penelope, as her description of the "secret things that only he and I know" (*Helen* 290–291; *Odys*. 23.109–110) makes clear.[37]

"And you, young man, who [feminine] are you (*hētis ei*)?" (134), the scattered "male" and "female" objects on Agathon's bed (130–145 and see 633); the in-law and Scythian archer's confusion of grammatical gender, 1015 ff., 1109 ff.; as Robson in McHardy et al., 2005, 177–180; Hall, 2006, 225–254; Sommerstein, *WT*, 221 on grammatical gender; Wright, 2005, 202 on a similar confusion of polarities in Euripides' escape plays.

34 Sommerstein, *WT*, 164; Austin and Olson, *WT*, 86–89 for Agathon's song, recalling the innovative *parodos* of the *Helen* and the *"Andromeda's"* focus on monody and response (1076–1077); L.P.E. Parker, 1997, 442–445 for the in-law's parody of Euripidean monody; Muecke, 1982a on Agathon's effeminacy as a common trope and Zimmermann in Slater and Zimmermann, 48–49 for ridicule of the solo-arias. Zimmermann notes that the separation of genres lets Aristophanes criticize in tragedy what he does himself in comedy.

35 Sommerstein, *WT*, 235; Austin and Olson, *WT*, 345–346.

36 Nichols, 1998, 109 is unusual in noticing that after Cleisthenes appears the Euripides plot is almost entirely dropped.

37 Foley, 1992 and 2001, 301–322 on Euripides' *anodos* plays and their virtuous and effective women and 2001, 335 for Penelope; Holmberg, 1995 on Euripides giving Helen an agency unavailable to Penelope.

When it has been remarked on, the fact that the parodies of the second half of the *Women at the Thesmophoria* contradict the play's premise has been seen as a kind of resolution, or even, as Zeitlin has described it, as Euripides' "palinode."[38] The problem with this interpretation is that the "renunciation" dates to the year before the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, as Echo's description of the *Andromeda* as last year's tragedy reminds us (1060–1061). Although irrationality, particularly chronological irrationality, is not a problem for Aristophanes, it is difficult to see the audience registering an accusation against Euripides made by showing that there was no longer any reason to accuse him.

Nor is it likely that the virtuous heroines are introduced to prepare us for the ending of the play. The humor of Euripides' sudden agreement arises from its being both utterly prosaic (after all of his elaborate stratagems) and utterly unexpected (as indicated by the surprise, if not suspicion, of the chorus, at 1164).[39] It seems more likely that Aristophanes chose the *Helen* and *Andromeda* for his parodies because they are escape dramas that he can transform, and because they introduce the theme of marriage.[40]

It is also marriage that the parodies focus on, in the reunion of Helen and Menelaus as husband and wife (866, 890–891, 900–901, 912–913, 919) and in Perseus' sudden love for Andromeda (1115–1118), culminating in the "bed and bridal couch" that he longs for (1122, and see 1034–1036). The theme, which has lain latent throughout, not least in the curious emphasis on Euripides' companion being a relative by marriage, a *kedestes* or "in-law" (74, 210, 584, 1165), also ends the play, both in Euripides' rather ironic injunction to his in-law—"And now you, in good manly fashion / as soon as you've been let go, run away and aim / straight for your wife and kids at home" (1204–1207)—

38 Zeitlin, 1996, 406: "The kinsman's impersonation of the "new" Helen, I have suggested, introduces a new role for women in Euripides' plays that serves implicitly to counteract the charges of slander that the women of the Thesmophoria have brought against the poet. A new, positive version of the feminine is offered in place of the old, and its representation forecasts Euripides' renunciation of his earlier errant ways."

39 Austin and Olson, *WT*, 336–337.

40 Zeitlin, 1996, 404 on the *stasimon* after the *Helen* parody: "[f]or the first time, the motif of legitimate marriage connected with Hera Teleia appears in [the chorus's] song (973–976), as if in response to the evocation of marriage in the parody of the *Helen*." Zeitlin does not note the same theme in the *Andromeda*, where Euripides, unlike Sophocles, opened with Andromeda and Perseus, allowing for a focus on marriage (Austin and Olson, *WT*, lxii–iii; Gibert in Mastronarde, 1999–2000). For Euripides' interest in marriage, as in the *Alcestis*, Blondell et al., 1999, 319–320 on *Iphigenia at Aulis*; Wolff, 1973 on *Helen*; Cropp in Collard et al., *Euripides*, 2.133 on *Andromeda*: "An innovative and influential play, with an unusual plot in which eligible young lovers overcome all obstacles to live happily ever after."

and in the chorus's final lines (as if in response to Euripides' threat to tell the women's husbands what they have been up to, 1167–1169): "But we have sported it now enough; the time has come for each of us to return / homeward" (1228–1229). Both lines are particularly noticeable, the first because of the unexpected introduction of the in-law's family, the second because the three-day Thesmophoria is ostensibly still only in its second day (80, 375–376, 984).[41]

Having identified comedy and tragedy with the male and female, and having introduced the theme of marriage, Aristophanes' final step is to create a sense that both are part of a greater whole—in this case the city. He does this in a way very like the method of the *Lysistrata*, by creating and then reconciling a comic war of the sexes. Aristophanes sets up the war as if it were between independent states. Like the women of the *Lysistrata*, the women of the Thesmophoria essentially establish their own government, accomplished through an elaborate parody of the Athenian Assembly, with their own *demos* (309, 335–336), herald (295 ff.), Council (372–373), Assembly (329–330), "state curses" (335 ff.), and *proxenos* or ambassador to the men (576).[42] Aristophanes reinforces the sense of two independent states by acting as if it is still business as usual among the men, with people gathered in the agora (457, 578), the *prytaneis*, or Assembly officials, keeping order (654, 764 ff.), and the Council meeting (943). Athens, it seems, is no longer Athens, where the men suspend business while the women conduct the Thesmophoria (78–80), but rather two separate *poleis*, one of the Athenians and one of the Athenianesses.[43] When it comes time to reconcile, Euripides will, accordingly, offer a peace treaty, by herald (1163), as if on the behalf of an independent state.

41 As Stehle, 2002, 370. That the women stayed at the festival is clear from the "hut-mate" of 624 and Hesychius k 3098. For the second day, a day of fasting, 948–949 and (for violations) 570, 733–734. See Parke, 1977, 85–86 for the huts and 86–88 for the three days; Brumfield, 1981, 79–84. For other references to marriage, see the vices cited, adultery, pilfering storehouses, and smuggling in babies, which imply marriage, the garland seller's loss of her husband (446), and "Andromeda's" desire to return home to his wife (1020).

42 Henderson, 1996, 92–93 for the Thesmophoria held on the Pnyx (*WT* 658), which would greatly reinforce the point; Sommerstein, *WT*, 196–197; Slater, 2002, 151, 294 n. 4 for discussion; Parke, 1977, 85 against. Although the dating is uncertain (as Slater, 2002, 295, n. 5; 299 n. 63), the proximity to the oligarchic coup of 411 suggests that the city "in two camps" may have been very relevant. See Loraux, 1980, 1984, 88 for the "race of women"; Detienne, 1989, 138–139 for the female city of the actual festival.

43 As in the prayers to "Olympians and Olympianesses," "Pythians and Pythianesses," "Delians and Delianesses" (331 ff.). Sommerstein, *WT*, 177 points out that "Athenians and Athenianesses" would have been identical in the genitive plural.

Long before Euripides' final settlement, however, Aristophanes has prepared us for the discovery that the opposed forces are complementary elements of one and the same city. The hints begin with the *parabasis*, where the chorus proposes that as distinguished men are given privileged seating in the theater, so their mothers should be honored in the women's festivals (832–839). As in the *Lysistrata*'s poignant comment that what women contribute to the war is their sons (651, etc.), the chorus's punning condemnation of Hyperbolus' mother—"As if you were worthy [to demand] interest (*tokou*), having born such a son (*tokon*)" (845)—serves as a reminder that in the end husbands and wives ("men" and "women" in the Greek) are also fathers and mothers, and so have the same fundamental investment in the city.[44] Finally, the entrance of the archer and the *prytanis*, or Assembly official, to deal with the in-law makes it clear that both "states" are governed by the same Council and Assembly.

And, at the same time, Aristophanes has gradually undone the separation of men and women by moving us from the Thesmophoria, where men and women are separated, back to the City Dionysia, where it seems likely that men and women celebrated together, though in separate areas of the theater.[45] Aristophanes accomplishes this simply by bringing men onstage. In contrast to the early, extended horror at the idea of a man infiltrating the Thesmophoria (584ff.) (ironically reported by Cleisthenes), Critylla makes no comment on the presence of "Menelaus," although she pointedly addresses him as male and points out that he is at the Thesmophorion (880–894), nor is any comment made about the Assembly official, the archer, "Perseus," Euripides himself (revealed when he makes his agreement with the chorus), or (for good measure) Woodworm, the boy piper.[46] A choral dance beginning with the goddesses of the Thesmophoria and ending with Dionysus (985–1000) and an exit song that, as often, combines the setting of the play with Aristophanes' prayer for victory (1230–1231) complete a move from Thesmophoria to Dionysia.[47]

44 See Pericles (Thuc. 2.44); Hubbard, 1991, 199; Roy, 1999, 4–5; Henderson, 1987b, 110–111.

45 Roselli in Revermann; Henderson, 1991b for women attending; Goldhill in Osborne and Hornblower against. *Peace* 965ff.; *Gorgias* 502b–d and *Laws* 817c seem to me to make it clear that women attended. It is not certain that the *Women at the Thesmophoria* was performed at the City Dionysia rather than the Lenaia, but as both were festivals to Dionysus, the references hold for either.

46 For the "selective treatment of reality" (Dover, 1972, 43) Sommerstein, *WT*, 216–217, and note the positive use of inconsistency often treated as a matter of convenience, emphasized by the series of actions also impossible in the sacred space, from capital punishment to sexual intercourse (429–431, 930ff., 1193ff.).

47 Sommerstein, *WT*, 237; Austin and Olson, *WT*, 350–351; Habash, 1997; Zeitlin, 1996, 399–405

Male and female, now reunited, return to home and marriage, and comedy and tragedy come back to the dramatic festival where the audience has been awaiting them all along.[48]

2.2 *Tragedy Takes Over: A Confrontation*

Aristophanes ridicules Euripides' escape dramas and his sensational portrayal of women by showing that it takes comedy to really do that job. In addition to this level of parody, however, there is another in which Aristophanes targets tragedy as such. Here, by removing the metatheatrical from Euripides' plays, Aristophanes restores, and ridicules, the intensity that made tragedy so powerful. Like Agathon, who must become what he writes about (146–152), or Echo, who can only repeat what is said to her, the intense experience of tragedy, in this view, amounts to the notion that the same person cannot entertain two different perspectives—his own and an imagined one, or his own and an interlocutor's—at the same time. The humor is summed up in the in-law's realization that the only thing that Euripides will respond to is his own tragedies (768–771, 847–850).[49] Like the joke about the Catholics in heaven, surrounded by a high wall lest they discover they are not the only ones there, tragic intensity, when viewed through a comic lens, means simply tragedy's inability to acknowledge that there is any other reality than its own.

This theme also emerges in the unusual parodies of the second half of the play, where tragedy attempts to take over the stage and comedy resists.[50] At

on the coming together of Dionysus and Demeter. In contrast Tzanetou, 2002 sees a movement away from Dionysus, self-liberation and punishment towards Demeter, cooperation and reconciliation. As in the reference to the *Lycurgus* trilogy (134–135), the infiltrator seems less like Persephone in the underworld than like Dionysus instituting his (tragic) rites among the unbelievers; Sommerstein, *WT*, 166–167; Austin and Olson, *WT*, 99–100; and for the in-law as (comically) parallel to Persephone, A.M. Bowie, 1993, 214–215.

48 In contrast Hall, 2006, 225–254 on the Greeks, male and female, uniting to defeat the barbarian; Austin and Olson, *WT*, lxvii (as lxiv: "The Resolution (or What Passes for One)") on the resolution evading "what might otherwise have been perceived to be the call for changes in the real world outside the Theatre"—a somewhat odd comment, since the issues of the play have been almost entirely theatrical ones.

49 Hence Euripides' speaking his own paratragic gobbledygook (5ff.), as Miller, 1946; Silk in Pelling, 161–162: "the Euripides of this play is an image in the same sense: he is a personification of the 'real' Euripides' own plays"; P.D. Arnott, 1962, 107–122 on the joke of Euripides believing his own plays based on his introduction of illusionist drama to the Greek stage.

50 Bobrick in Dobrov ("While appearing to attack the tyranny of roles, Aristophanes presents a comically subversive portrait of the tyranny of theater over the hearts and minds of

the opening of the play, for example, the only reason for Euripides and his in-law to withdraw after calling upon Agathon (36–37) is so that they can serve as an audience to his servant's performance.[51] The resistance to tragic hegemony starts here: Euripides commands the in-law to be quiet and listen (26, 28, 45, 95, 99), but he insists on interrupting until finally, despite tragedy's (from Aristophanes' point of view) disinclination to dialogue, servant and poet are forced to respond (46 ff., 130 ff.).[52] The same scene will be repeated between Critylla and "Menelaus" and the Scythian archer and "Perseus," where, again, the comic figures engage and challenge the performance, while the "tragic" performers refuse to be drawn out of their roles, trying instead to suck the spectators into the tragedy.[53] The *Women at the Thesmophoria*'s interest in this theme is so strong, in fact, that the play contains almost no other metatheater and, outside the *parabasis*, no references to contemporary politics.[54] Any breaking through the illusion of drama is reserved for the comic characters' attempts to break through the spreading encroachment of tragedy.

Athenian citizens" 191) connects the taking over to gender: "Euripides and Mnesilochus treat the celebrants of the Thesmophoria as if they were merely supporting characters in a newly improvised play, *Escape from the Thesmophoria*" (182); McClure, 1999, 218, building on Zeitlin, 1996, links the seductiveness of tragedy to rhetoric: "I argue that the play problematizes the role of speech in the democratic polis by associating tragic mimesis, and tragic poets generally, with the seductive and corrupting rhetorical practices of the sophists, practices that the comic poet correlates with aberrant sexuality"; Henderson 1996, 97 links to genre: "Comedy, while (like the Kinsman), it maintains its own generic integrity, can incorporate tragedy and also (at least in the case of Euripides) go it one better"; Zeitlin 1996, 388 quotes Stewart, 1979 on parody "taking in and taking over."

51 Slater, 2002, 153.

52 The parallel between poet and servant is brought out by the servant (the third actor) announcing that Agathon will be right out (66), meaning right after the actor changes into his Agathon costume. In *Acharnians* Euripides, also wheeled out for a costuming request, is similarly reluctant to engage in dialogue, as Slater, 2002, 154–155.

53 Slater, 2002, 171–172: "[Euripides] seems on one level to be demonstrating his own vulnerability to the enchantment of his own tragedies. He accepts their fictions and makes himself part of the illusion, in contrast to Critylla, who does not suspend her disbelief in Mnesilochus' performance for a moment"; Sommerstein, *WT*, 214 on "Critylla's refusal to be beguiled into the fictive world which Inlaw and Euripides are trying to create"; Muecke, 1977 on the refusal reflecting the nature of the theater. It is also their comic qualities, the Scythian's imperfect Greek (Willi, 2003, 224) and Critylla's insistence on the physical that render them impervious, as Saïd, 1987, 233.

54 The lack of political references has been attributed to the charged political situation; Dover, 1972, 168–172 for the situation and the few references; Westlake, 1980 on the play as addressing the oligarchs.

As a whole the *Women at the Thesmophoria* portrays tragedy's attempt to gain a stranglehold on reality. It does so through gradual infiltration, from Agathon's lyrics to the parody of the *Telephus* to the newly created trilogy, *Palamedes*, *Helen*, and *Andromeda*, with the Artemisia turn for a satyr play.[55] Like Echo in the *Andromeda* parody, the new element comes in unobtrusively and only to help (1056–1064), but before one has noticed it has taken over the show. A contrast with the *Acharnians* reveals how the *Telephus* in particular steals into the play. In the *Acharnians*, Euripides' scenes are rearranged so that the initial hostage scene makes the parody obvious. The *Women at the Thesmophoria*, in contrast, leaves the hostage scene to the end, following the likely order of the *Telephus*: disguise, speech (where references to the *Telephus* are muted), search, exposure, and, finally, the iconic hostage scene.[56] The result is a focus on the in-law as infiltrator, and as an infiltrator driven to extremes. The approach also makes an infiltrator of the parody, since, by keeping the most recognizable parallel for last, Aristophanes makes the parody also sneak in before it was noticed.[57]

The *Telephus* parody also illustrates tragedy's tendency to take over not only the lines of the play, but also the emotions of its audience. As the in-law takes Mica's child hostage, the chorus bursts into terrified dochmiacs, the tragic meter associated with agitation and distress. The in-law responds calmly, as Eteocles responded to the dochmiacs of the chorus in the *Seven Against Thebes*. Nor does his discovery that the hostage is actually a wineskin significantly change his response; he continues, like Mica, to refer to it as a child.[58] He then does the unthinkable, and kills it. A thought experiment concerning the

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55 Or possibly a *Telephus*, *Palamedes*, *Helen* trilogy with the *Andromeda* as prosatyric. The references to the *Lycurgus* trilogy and Euripides' notorious lines (194, 272) belong to the gradual infiltration of tragedy; see Platter, 2006, 171–172 for the significance of the *Alcestis* quote (*WT* 193–194) in particular.

56 Cropp in Collard et al., *Euripides*, 1.19; Heath, 1987b, 273; Sommerstein, *WT*, 186–187; Zeitlin, 1996, 389 points out that we see the parody only retrospectively; Austin and Olson, *WT*, lviii: "Exactly when the parody of *Telephus* begins—or, better put, exactly when the audience in the Theater can be expected to recognize that a parody is underway—is unclear"; while Slater, 2002, 163–164 argues that 471–472 may be quoted from the *Acharnians* rather than the *Telephus*.

57 The infiltration theme may have already snuck in with Agathon's lyrics on Troy's "day of freedom," when the wooden horse entered the city; Sommerstein, *WT*, 164; Easterling in Easterling 1997, 176–177.

58 L.P.E. Parker, 1997, 424–426 for the rhythms. The disguise enables the wineskin to be smuggled into the Thesmophoria's fast-day; see Mitchell, 2009, 3–4 for comic depictions on vases of women drinking wine.

audience's response is telling. Despite the obvious fact that the slain "child" is a wineskin, despite the wineskin itself being perfectly visible to the audience, and despite the joke of trying to gain possession of the "blood," the moment that the knife goes in must have created a brief frisson of horror—and then laughter, all the stronger for the realization of how absurd the emotion was. This is how tragedy appropriates reality. We know that this is not really a child—the point of the scene is that this is not really a child—and yet "tragedy" has taken over so far as to create a glimmer of emotional response even here.

As with the "death" of the wineskin, tragedy's encroachment also applies to physical objects. As we saw in the first chapter, tragedy imbues objects, like Ajax's sword or Clytemnestra's carpet, with meaning—the meaning that works for the particular tragedy. Aristophanes mocks this tendency by having his parodies also absorb the objects on stage, transforming the votive tablets into oars (765–775), the in-law's costume into Helen's (851), the stage altar into a tomb (886, as Euripides' *Helen* must also have done), and the plank to which the in-law is fastened into Andromeda's stake (1000–1007).[59] Even the characters on stage are not immune, as Critylla is transformed into Theonoe (897–899), the in-law's "outraged [as shaven] cheeks" into Helen's blushes (903), and the chorus into the "maidens" addressed by Andromeda.[60] Even more remarkably, the tragic parody begins to act completely on its own, spontaneously summoning forth a "Menelaus" to answer its Helen and creating, ex nihilo, Echo herself, a comic flesh and blood version of one of Euripides' cleverer devices.[61]

In contrast to tragedy's encroachment, Critylla and the Scythian archer insist upon the comic viewpoint. For them the altar is an altar, not a tomb (888); Critylla is Critylla, not Theonoe (897–898); not Proteus but (the actual) Proteas is dead (874–876, 883); and the only "Gorgon" present is Gorgus, secretary to the Council and the Scythian archer's boss (1101–1104).[62] The contrast between

59 Wright, 2012, 161.

60 In good comic fashion the objects resist: costumes need arranging (256); tablets resist the chisel (778–781); it is ill-omened to call an altar a tomb (887–888); and the plank which binds "Andromeda" gets in the way, in a very physical sense, of any serious relations between herself and her lover (1123–1124).

61 The runaround of 1090–1097 makes it clear that Echo appears on stage, while the Scholiast on 1018 guarantees that in *Andromeda* she was a voice from the *skene*. Rau, 1967, 84 for Echo as a serious criticism of Euripides; Slater, 2002, 175–176 for Echo as tragic and unpadded, and so not played by Euripides (clearly identified in his other roles), as Sommerstein, *WT*, 226–227; Heath, 1987c, 51 n. 106. Zeitlin, 1996, 397 with the Scholiast, sees Euripides as Echo, but exaggerates his "directing." It is, after all, the in-law who originates the parodies and the humor lies largely in Euripides being constrained by his own lines.

62 Sommerstein, *WT*, 230. Zeitlin, 1996, 399 sees a reference to Gorgias, but *grammateus* (1103) seems quite definite.

the genres is striking. Where tragedy takes over the alien element and assigns it a new, "tragic," identity, comedy lets the alien element be itself, whether it fits or not. Critylla accepts without surprise the sudden appearance of "Menelaus," and the archer is unperturbed by the appearance of a flying hero in winged sandals. And while both try to understand the "tragic" events in their own comic terms, they do not thereby assign them a new meaning. Critylla supposes that the stranger's inability to grasp Proteas' death is due to seasickness (882), and while the archer is not sympathetic to the stranger's passion for an old man in a saffron robe, he allows it as a possibility. He does not even seem unduly concerned that the stranger is carrying Gorgus, the secretary's, head in a bag. Like the in-law's Andromeda, plagued by Echo's interruptions, tragedy in the *Women at the Thesmophoria* tries to sing monody, its single song. Even in the interchange between priestess and chorus that Agathon sings, one voice has all the roles. Comedy, in contrast, which reminds us that Echo is an actor attempting to upstage the protagonist (1076), prefers multiple realities.[63]

3 *Frogs*: Comedy—and Tragedy—Save the City

> A man was thoroughly enjoying his first airplane trip when the captain came on the loudspeaker to announce that an engine had malfunctioned and the flight would arrive at its destination a half hour late. All went smoothly until the captain came on again to say another engine had malfunctioned and they would be an hour late. Then the third engine went out, and the captain announced they would be two hours late. At this point the man turned to his friend and said: "Well, I just hope that last engine is all right. Otherwise we'll be up here all night."

3.1 *The Descent into Hades* or *Kicking in Open Doors*

Like the joke above, the *Frogs* is about the benefit of unreason when one finds oneself in desperate straits. It is also, explicitly, and not unrelatedly, about the benefit of tragedy. The play closes with the comic Dionysus bringing Aeschylus

63 The comic Echo insists on independence, paralleling her physical autonomy with a verbal willfulness that alters *ou kaiphseis*, "you won't get free" to *ouk aireseis*, "you won't get me" (1093–1094); Sommerstein, *WT*, 229. Zeitlin, 1996, 397–399 sees Echo as between Euripides and Aristophanes, tragedy and comedy.

home to save Athens. Pluto's final injunction to the chorus—"Now you display your sacred torches / in his honor, and send him on his way / with his own lyrics and his melodies / hymning his praises" (1524–1527)—implies that after the short final chorus that survives (in Aeschylean dactyls, as 1264–1295), the play ended with a torchlight procession to the music of Aeschylus himself. The procession recalls another play with ties to the Mysteries, the *Oresteia*, and the torchlight parade that there, at the close of the trilogy, introduced the Furies to Athens, promising the city's salvation.[64] The difference is that to save Athens this time, Dionysus has the less rational task of bringing Aeschylus himself back from the dead. The implication, as we will see, is that while the city requires comedy's self-analysis and rather cynical view of human self-determination, it also requires tragedy's incompatible, but complementary, emotional intensity.[65]

This ending has given rise to two widespread conclusions. One sees a deep strain of pessimism in the *Frogs*, since the resurrection it depicts is impossible.[66] The other, like the usual interpretation of the *Women at the Thesmopho-*

64 Habash, 2002, 15–17; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 251; Slater, 2002, 205 citing Radermacher and Dover; Sells in Marshall and Kovaks, 91–93.

65 For intimations of this, Nichols, 1998, 143–161 argues, as I do, that tragedy can create the emotional intensity implied in a willingness to die for one's country, while comedy saves the city by being critical; Gredley in Silk, 212–213 sees "the rebirth of 'proper tragedy'" as the aim, while for Reckford, 1987, 429: "if the Old comedy is to maintain its own irreverent and irresponsible ways, it requires as its foil the dignity and moral seriousness of the older tragedy. Therefore, if modern tragedy goes its unedifying way, then comedy in turn may need to change its nature, to alternate humor with seriousness, to take up the slack." See Konstan, 1995, 74 on Euripides and Aeschylus as mirroring the tension of the City Dionysia; Lada-Richards, 1999, 312–325 on both comedy and tragedy as necessary. In contrast, Cartledge, 1990, 30 sees Aristophanes as focusing on tragedy because no comic poet other than himself would be suitable.

66 C. Segal, 1961, 230: "Aristophanes seems to sense an imminent collapse of Athens, and tries to make a final defense of an art form which, more than any other, is inseparable from its communal setting. His concern with the imagery of death and resurrection, however, suggests that he also sensed the futility of his effort"; Nichols, 1998, 191: "The comic fantasy surrounding that design [salvation of the city] points to the tragic improbability of its attainment in reality"; Bowie, 1993, 252–253 sees no triumph: "after all, Aeschylus is dead"; Friedrich, 1980, 15. Views that recognize the importance of tragedy also incline this way: Whitman, 1964, 243: "Comedy yields to tragedy, and the kaleidoscopic multiplicity of speech yields to the single, ineluctable fact of death"; G.B. Walsh, 1984, 95–96: "the last round of the questioning suggests that in making Aeschylus the victor, Aristophanes has been forced to sacrifice something of his own comic art, its distanced, unconfounded and unconfounding satirical clarity."

ria, sees the play as revealing comedy's superiority to tragedy, since it is comedy that brings Aeschylus back. Both views are half right. Although the latter view neglects the importance of tragedy, the attention it pays to comedy is important. The second half of the *Frogs* is about tragedy, but the first is just as emphatically about comedy, from the opening discussion of which joke to open with to Heracles' emphatic and very unusual laughter at the comic hero (42–46). In a rather more perverse way, the pessimistic view of the play is also half right. Although from one point of view the resurrection of Aeschylus was impossible, from another it had already been done. As Aeschylus reminds us in pointing out that his plays did not die with him (868–869), the ending of *Frogs* recalls a "resurrection" that the Athenians had already arranged—the restaging of Aeschylus at the dramatic festivals.[67] Nonetheless, to restage the *Persians* was one thing; to bring back the Athens that was victorious at Marathon and Salamis was quite another.[68]

We will return at the end of the chapter to what tragedy brings to the balance. For now we will consider what comedy adds, which is, as usual, a reminder that the necessity that gripped Athens in 405 had a very human, self-created, basis. This emerges in the play's inversion of tragedy, which moves from the ultimate impersonal necessity to a very human one. *Frogs* follows the common motif of a descent into Hades to rescue the dead. The theme appears in the Alcestis, Orpheus, and Persephone myths, as well as in the story used here, Heracles' attempt to rescue Theseus and Peirithous from the underworld, dramatized in Euripides' lost *Peirithous*.[69] The reason that the motif is so widespread is clear. As Shakespeare put it, death is "the undiscovered country from whose bourn / no traveler returns."[70] To venture into hell and return, and particularly to rescue

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67 See Slater, 2002, 308 n. 52 and Chapter Three, section one for the restaging of Aeschylus' plays.

68 Wills, 1969a, 57, arguing for no reply at 1461: "Athens will live if it desires the resurrection of Aeschylus. The mere willingness to listen to him, to its best self, its heroic past, will effect a salvation that no scheming could accomplish"; Woodbury in Cropp et al., 1986, 252 compares Wordsworth's "Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour" ("London, 1802").

69 For the myth, Gantz, 1993, 291–295; Dobrov, 2001, 133–156 for *Frogs* patterned on *Peirithous* specifically; Sutton, 1987 for the *Peirithous* as by Euripides, not Critias, allowing for situational, if not specific parody; for an attribution to Critias, Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 10 and 9–10 for the theme in Eupolis' *Demes* and Aristophanes' *Gerytades*; Duchemin, 1957, 273 ff. for other mythic models; J.R. Green, 1994, 16–19 for early vases depicting a tragic raising from the dead; Rau, 1966, 115–136 for a survey of paratragic elements in the *Frogs*.

70 Hamlet, 3.1.78–79; similarly Circe to Odysseus (*Odys*.12.20–23) and the Sibyl to Aeneas (*Aeneid* 6.125–129).

another human being from its embraces, is to overcome the ultimate limits on human life and accomplish the ultimate heroic journey.

As usual, Aristophanes turns the tragic framework on its head. In tragedy the focal point of the descent is a confrontation with necessity. In the *Frogs*, the necessity is illusory and the humor lies in the elaborate buildup to a task that turns out to be no harder than kicking in an open door. Dionysus descends to the underworld to face the terrors of hell, but there is nothing to face, and the elaborate send-up of his "heroism" brings out only its ultimate pointlessness. The monsters (285 ff., 143–144, 470–478) are imaginary, his primary foe is an innkeeper, and after the absurd immortality contest (628–673) the play shifts, suddenly and without explanation, to a tragedy competition,[71] preparing for the even greater shift at the end. The necessity Dionysus faces, it turns out, is not the inexorability of Death, but rather the problem of making up his mind about which playwright, of the several on offer, he wants to bring home.

Aristophanes emphasizes the comic change in direction by making the plot shifts as abrupt as possible.[72] The second half is introduced by what is virtually a new prologue, now between Xanthias and a fellow slave. Aristophanes then, having lured our attention away from Euripides (who has not been mentioned since 1.105), suddenly brings back, with the poetry contest, the issue debated six hundred lines earlier by Dionysus and Heracles. The second shift is even more abrupt. Having settled his audience into the poetry contest, and into the three speaking roles of Dionysus, Aeschylus, and Euripides, Aristophanes suddenly, and completely unexpectedly, has Pluto speak, reminding Dionysus of "what he came here for" (1414) in the first place.[73] These shifts have been regarded as compositional flaws, due to the sudden death of Sophocles, the inconsistency of comedy, or just to Aristophanes' change of mind.[74] Other interpretations, which we will look at, find a unifying thread in the play's treatment of

71 For the play's two halves Harriot, 1986, 115; C. Segal, 1961, 207–208 connecting them through the character of Dionysus; Stanford, *Frogs*, xxiv–xxvi, who sees this as usual in Aristophanes. As Taplin, 1978, 148 on the *Ajax*: "It is incredible, and yet typical, that the fact that the *Ajax* is divided into two parts has so often been treated as though it were some accident or miscalculation, when Sophocles has constructed this division so carefully and deliberately, and when the relation between the two halves is so clearly one of his chief artistic concerns."

72 To the extent of concentrating obscenity in the first half, Henderson, 1991a, 91. For a contrasting view, which sees Aristophanes as covering up the shift, Biles, 2011, 251.

73 As earlier, the interjection is particularly sudden as it requires a fourth actor (Dover, *Frogs*, 105). See Nichols, 1998, 149 ff. for Aeschylus, never mentioned in the first part of the play, being a particular surprise.

74 Hooker, 1980 for a number of such suggestions; Russo, 1966 and 1994, 198–202; Whitman,

Dionysus. None of these readings, however, explain why Aristophanes goes out of his way to emphasize the discrepancy.

In looking at the play against the background of tragedy, however, it becomes clear that what the shifts in plot bring out is that Dionysus is facing not a tragic necessity, but a very human and comic one—the need to make up his own mind. The point is underlined through metatheater. As Aristophanes reminds us, by having Dionysus appeal to his priest, seated in the front row of the theater (296), by bringing the critical acumen of the audience into the contest (1099–1118), and by creating an *agon* that replicates the contest of the Dionysia, Dionysus' judgment in the underworld recalls his presence, here and now, at the dramatic contest the audience is also attending. Through his sudden shift in direction Aristophanes makes the point that right now it is not the necessity of tragedy the Athenians need to worry about, but rather its absurd comic twin—the much graver difficulty that human beings create for themselves.[75]

In 405 the joke was not an innocuous one. When Dionysus suddenly declares that he has come for a poet "so that the city might be saved and go on conducting her choruses" (1418–1419), the audience knew only too well what he meant. Although the play is set in the underworld, it is an extremely Athenian underworld, and the political situation of Athens is ever-present.[76] The Athenian naval victory at Arginusae, so important that the slaves who fought in it were freed and apparently made Athenian citizens, had occurred about six months earlier and forms a continuous undercurrent in the play. Cleophon, who was responsible for the Athenian rejection of Sparta's offer of peace, is referred to throughout, most emphatically in the play's last line (678–685, 1504, 1532–1533). The execution of the commanders at Arginusae for their failure to rescue the dead and dying (having been prevented by a sudden storm) appears (1195–1196), along with Theramenes, who was responsible for their trial (541, 967, 968–970). The motif of a ship caught in a storm also runs throughout the

1964, 230 ff. for inconsistencies due to hasty revision; Dover, 1993, 6–9 for a summary and backhanded compliment: "It is hard on a dramatist if his most striking and successful innovation in plot-structure is to be treated by posterity, because his other plots are not so good, as the unhappy consequence of hasty revision" (9).

75 As 1475: "What's shameful, if it seem not so to the audience?"; Rogers, *Frogs*, 140, on Charon charging two obols, not one, which is the entrance price to the theater; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 168; Slater, 2002, 185.

76 As with the Attic form of Persephone's name, Pherephatta (671), the "maintenance in the Prytaneum" (764) and references to Athens as "our city" (1501).

play.[77] As it turned out, the sense of danger was only too accurate. Six months after the *Frogs* was produced, the Athenians would suffer their final defeat at Aegospotami, the Peloponnesian War would be over, and Athens, completely at the mercy of Sparta, would be faced with the destruction of her walls and the likelihood that her women and children would be enslaved and her men, including Aristophanes, put to death.

Aristophanes' approach to the danger, however, continues to be very much his own. When Dionysus asks the tragedians for advice on saving the city, only one response, Euripides' comic plan to drop vinegar in the enemy's eyes (1440–1441), has anything to do with Athens's opponents.[78] All the rest concern Athens. The implication is that for Aristophanes (as apparently for Thucydides), the enemy that threatened to bring Athens down was not Sparta or Corinth or Thebes, but rather Athens herself.[79] As the play's unusual references to suicide suggest (120–134, 1504–1509), the comic idea that we create our own necessity was, in this particular dramatic festival, terribly relevant.

As Niall Slater has pointed out, Aristophanes grounded his frequent claim that comedy was (or at least could be) the salvation of Athens in its ability to penetrate the pretense of democratic politics.[80] In 405, however, debunking the demagogues was no longer enough. The claim of the *Frogs* is that what is needed is a new dedication of the citizens to their city. As the comic Dionysus prepares for his return to Athens, probably accompanied by Xanthias, once more carrying the luggage (5 ff.),[81] Aeschylus accompanies him. Both the comic and the tragic figures are necessary. The comic Dionysus is required, as always, to show the city its own absurdity. But the specific absurdity that Aristophanes was pointing to in 405 was the city's failure to hear what a long-dead tragedian was still saying to them about the need to sacrifice oneself for the city. That lesson comedy could not teach. For that Aristophanes needed tragedy.

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77 Hunt, 2001 for the battle and its implications; Worthington, 1989 unusually doubting the manumission; Allan in Marshall and Kovaks, esp. 104–109 on the frequent naval references; for the city as a "ship of state" beset by waves (361, 704) Edmunds, 1987, 8–16; Forrest, 229–239 and Campbell, 115–120, both in Cropp et al., 1986; Moorton, 1987 for the seaborne danger of the *Andromeda* (53) and see *Frogs* 303–304.

78 For these lines as a doublet, dropped in the play's second production (perhaps after the war), Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 286 ff.; Dover, *Frogs*, 373 ff.

79 See, for example, Thucydides 8.1 and 96, and the immortal version of Walt Kelly's Pogo: "We have met the enemy and he is us" (as Reckford, 1987, 193).

80 Slater, 2002 and see Reckford, 1987 for comedy diagnosing, curing, and restoring the city.

81 As Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 295. For Dover the reappearance of Xanthias "would remind us unseasonably of the buffoonery of the first part of the play" (*Frogs*, 381–382).

3.2 *Initiation and Polarities* or *Discovering Tragedy*

> Escalus: What do you think of the trade, Pompey? is it a lawful trade?
> Pompey: If the law would allow it, sir.
>
> SHAKESPEARE, *Measure for Measure*

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The *Frogs* will end with a clear redefinition of tragic drama, as Aeschylus returns to the Athenian tragic stage and Euripides is banned forever from the Chair of Tragedy (1520–1523). Aristophanes, however, cannot present the emotional intensity of tragedy. This is not only because he ridicules Aeschylus every bit as much as he ridicules Euripides, which he does. It is also because the quality in tragedy that is needed is the sense of being swept away, the quality in tragedy we saw ridiculed in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*. The closest Aristophanes can get to this are the "corrected" tragedies of *Women at the Thesmophoria*, which are made comic by the juxtaposition of the comic characters who refuse to buy in to them. Comedy can point to this view, but its own world, like Pompey's vision of the law in the epigraph above, remains man-made and in flux.[82]

As we will see in the next two sections, Aristophanes takes on the difficult job of revealing what comedy cannot do by establishing Dionysus as a typical comic hero in the first half of the play, and then transferring these qualities onto Euripides, leaving Aeschylus to represent a contrasting, and properly tragic, emotional intensity. Euripides and Dionysus, associated in the first half of the play, share sophistry, wordplay, and a focus on the individual. Aeschylus, in contrast, has a thymotic, martial, and rather unintelligible grandeur that suggests tragedy's emotional power. The *Lysistrata* played against the usual individualism of comedy by making a respectable woman the hero; the *Frogs* uses a radi-

82 Silk in Pelling, 1990, 170 for a Bakhtinian relativity of values; Redfield in Winkler and Zeitlin, 328: "In tragedy, culture is seen as continuous with nature, in that both are arenas of lawful, comprehensible forces linked by man's submission to the gods. In Old Comedy, on the other hand, the hero need not submit to the gods; neither is nature permanent. The species are not separate or stable: a man could be a wasp or a horse, could converse with frogs or clouds. Amid such universal anarchy, the cultural order must seem absurdly insubstantial."

cal shift in Dionysus to achieve the same end. But before Aristophanes can get there he must establish, confuse, and then reestablish a number of polarities.

The *Frogs*, like *Women at the Thesmophoria*, takes advantage of the common ritual pattern of separation, confusion of categories, and reestablishment. Here, as the aim is to resurrect a dead tragic poet, the most basic opposition to be confounded and reestablished in new terms is that of life and death, linking the pattern to the Eleusinian Mysteries, where, as in a fifth-century inscription, life becomes death becomes life.[83] References to the Mysteries abound—in Heracles' initial description of the initiates (154–163); in their surprise appearance, after the titular frogs, as the actual chorus of the play (312–320); in Aeschylus' particular connection, as in his prayer—"Demeter, nourisher of my spirit, / may I be worthy of thy Mysteries" (886–887);[84] and most notably in the play's pervasive theme of a reversal of life and death ("who knows if death is life and life is dying?" *Frogs* 1082, 1477–1478; Eurip. fr. 638).[85] Even Dionysus' move from an infatuation with Euripides to his selection of Aeschylus has been seen as an initiation or rite of passage, though, as I will argue, the "passage" is more one of plot than character.[86]

The pattern of separation, confusion of categories, and reestablishment is established in the first half of *Frogs* through the initial pairings of Heracles/Dionysus and Dionysus/Xanthias, and the initial oppositions of slave/master and mortal/immortal.[87] The confrontation of Dionysus and Heracles confuses the categories classically. The two are, as Aristophanes reminds us, brothers (58, 60), but as they are also diametrically opposed, it is a relation not often

83 Bremmer 1994, 84–97; Seaford *Bacchae*, 43 on the fifth-century bone plate inscribed "Dionysos" and "life death life." For a reversal of life and death in the Mysteries, Easterling in Easterling, 52; Burkert, 1987; Cole in Carpenter and Faraone, 276–296; Tucker and Harrison, 1904; Brown, 1991 for Empousa and Heracles' connection to initiation (49). For the Lesser Mysteries, conducted in the Spring and connected to Heracles, Parke, 1977, 56–60, 122–124; Brumfield, 1981, 139 –146. For the connection to *Frogs*, Sells in Marshall and Kovaks, 83–99; Lada-Richards, 1999, 57 and in Silk, 411 for an extensive bibliography.

84 For Aeschylus as a native of Eleusis, Lefkowitz, 1981, 68 and for his Mystic imagery, Bowie, 1993, 245 ff.; Aristotle, *Ethics* 1111a9.

85 Euripides' *Polyidus* fr. 638, quoted at Plato, *Gorgias* 492e and see the similar Euripides, *Phrixus* fr. 833.

86 C. Segal, 1961; Moorton, 1989; Lada-Richards, 1999 overall and 110–122 for the relation to tragedy; Reckford, 1987, 408–413, 432 ff.; Konstan 1986.

87 Hoffman, 1989 for role-reversal; Konstan, 1995, 61–74 for liminality. Sommerstein, 2009, 136–154 on Aristophanes' subversion of the categories "slave" and "free," "citizen" and "non-citizen."

thought of. Both are sons of Zeus by mortal mothers and both are associated with Eleusis. The mortal Heracles, however, suggests savage masculine toil and endurance, and the immortal Dionysus, feminine luxury and effortless power, a contrast made vivid in Dionysus' usual saffron robe and soft shoes (*kothornoi*), topped off with Heracles' traditional lion-skin and club (47–48).[88]

The confusion of categories of the first scene continues as Xanthias and Dionysus journey through the underworld, trading the lion-skin disguise back and forth, and with it the roles of slave and master and mortal and immortal.[89] The confusion is underlined by references to Arginusae, where, as the *parabasis* puts it, "from slaves they were masters" (694), while Dionysus' scornful disbelief that a mortal and a slave could play the role of Heracles (530–531, 582–583) reminds us that Heracles himself was both.[90] The slippage comes to a head in Aeacus' comic attempt to tell which of the two, slave or master, is the god, underlined by Dionysus' wonderfully absurd attempt to maintain the (self-evidently false) proposition that gods do not feel pain.

And then suddenly, in Pluto's off-stage judgment, the confusion is resolved (670–671, 741–742) and the categories restored. Xanthias is returned unambiguously to the role of slave in a second prologue, where he and a fellow slave discuss the joys of harassing one's master (738 ff.), and Dionysus follows, recognized and embraced by his immortal kin (670–671) and ready, now in his own traditional costume, to resume his role as guest of honor at a theatrical contest.[91] He is also positioned to repeat the pattern through another judgment (and separation) that will restore Aeschylus to Athens and keep Euripides away from the Chair of Tragedy for good (1520–1523).[92] The sequence of pairings—

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88 C. Segal, 1961, 209–210; Lada-Richards, 1999, 17–44; Bowie, 1993, 237–238. D. Walsh, 2009, 150 describes two comic vases that depict Dionysus disguised as Heracles. For the significance of Heracles' costume in Euripides see Wyles in Harrison and Liapis.

89 Similarly, Agathon's slave pointedly leaves to recostume himself as his master (*WT* 70), as also at *Birds* 84; Dearden, 1976, 93 on this as a regular comic turn.

90 Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 203–204 and, in contrast, Hall in Easterling 1997, 110–118: "the tragic texts everywhere assume that the slave/free boundary is as fixed, natural, and permanent as the boundary between man and god" (112). The later popularity of the clever slave / buffoonish master can blind us to the innovation, as P. Wilson, 2000a, 126; McLeish, 1980, 132–133 sees *Frogs* and *WT* as the only "double acts" in Aristophanes.

91 C. Segal, 1961, 216 for the "slaves' dialogue" scene restoring proper order and 217, in the usual pattern of "victory by the *parabasis*": "the increased dignity of Dionysus, his appointment as judge, and the full recognition of his divinity are all the happy results of his victory ..."

92 *Krisis* is here emphatic, repeated at 779, 785, 805, 873, 1411, 1415, 1467 and 1519. Suggestively, given the historical circumstances, Thucydides uses the word for the deciding events of war, as 1.23.

Dionysus and Heracles, Dionysus and Xanthias, Aeschylus and Euripides—is emphatic.[93] The final pairing they lead to, of Dionysus and Aeschylus (who, as they prepare for their return to Athens, are addressed in the dual, 1479), and the parallel judgments made in the first and second halves of *Frogs* suggest a common pattern of distinguishing opposites, a pattern reinforced by the *parabasis* that separates the two halves of the play and is itself concerned with the confusion of worthy and unworthy citizens (compared to the confusion of spurious and genuine coins) and the need to distinguish between them (718–737).

What the ritual pattern of *Frogs* thus reveals is that discovering the true tragedian is harder than it seems. The problem emerges both in Dionysus' difficulty in deciding and in the complications of the contest itself. On the one hand, as we will see, it is unclear if the poets are being judged for their technical prowess or for their moral teaching. On the other, in a confusion of categories familiar from his earlier works, Aristophanes links Euripides and comedy, here through the explicitly comic Dionysus of the first half of the play. The connection is made not only through Dionysus' devotion to Euripides, and in the absurdity of his Euripidean quotations, such as "sky, bedroom of Zeus" or "the tongue that perjures itself in private from the heart" (100–102), but also through the common comic terms of abuse, *poneros*, "worthless," and *panourgos* "villain," first traded back and forth between Xanthias and Dionysus (35, 546, 549) and then used regularly of Euripides (80, 781, 852, 1053, 1520). The terms appear as well in the repeated charge that Euripides appeals to scoundrels and lowlifes (781, 1015, and see 771ff.), while Heracles describes Euripides' work as *pamponera* ("utterly worthless," 106) and *kobala* ("wearisome," "knavish," 104), an exclusively comic term taken from exactly the "portage" jokes that, as the "usual" sort of comic routine, permeate the first scene.[94] As the play ends, Aeschylus

93 Whatever Sophocles' role had he lived, once dead his part is straightforward: to yield his claim ("good-natured up here, good-natured down there" 82) so that Aristophanes can have a pair of tragedians to work with. Similarly, Dobrov, 2001, 210 n. 91 in terms of a Theseus-Peirithous dichotomy. Following Aristophanes' usual approach the Aeschylus / Euripides opposition recalls Stronger and Weaker Logos, as *Clouds* 1364–1379, *Frogs* 1491–1499; hence Padilla, 1992 sees Aeschylus as heroic and Euripides as a sophist. R. Rosen's view of an "intertextual playfulness" undermining the choice (2004) fails to consider Aristophanes' traditional, and intertextual, criticism of Euripides.

94 Habash, 2002, 11 for the comic vocabulary in the quotations; for *poneros*, Whitman's characterizing term for the comic hero (1964, 29–34), *Knights* 181, 186, 336, 337 etc., *Birds* 3, *Clouds* 542, *Wasps* 193 etc. and for *panourgos*, *Acharn.* 311, *Knights* 331, 683, 684, *Lys.* 11, *Women at the Thesmophoria* 524, 727, 1112 etc. Similarly, *Philebus* 48c links the *geloios* and

reinforces both the connection of Euripides to comedy and the division of the genres by demanding that Euripides, the "*panourgos*, false-speaker, and buffoon (*bomolochos*)" (1520–1521), never occupy the Chair of Tragedy.

The comic terms that Aristophanes uses for Euripides in *Frogs* reinforce a motif he had been playing with since the *Acharnians*.[95] As we saw in Chapter Six, Old Comedy regularly assumed an audience familiarity with earlier plays. Aristophanes had made a joke of his regular mockery of Euripides as far back as *Wasps* (61), and a play such as *Women at the Thesmophoria* would not have diminished the impression. He had also used an opposition of Euripides and Aeschylus as early as *Clouds* (*Clouds* 1364–1372; *WT* 134–136).[96] In this context, the abuse of Euripides in *Frogs* serves almost as a comprehensive retrospective, including Euripides' atheism (889 ff., cf. *WT* 11–18, 450–455), his lowlife characters (846, 948 ff., cf. *Acharn.* 411–413), sexual perversion (850, 1079–1081, cf. *Clouds* 1371–1372), his notorious lines (98–102, 1082, 1471–1478, *WT* 272, 275–276), his mother the vegetable seller (840, 947, cf. *Acharn.* 475–478, *WT* 456), heroes dressed in rags (841–842, 1063–1064, cf. *Acharn.* 410–479, *Peace* 146–148), immoral women (1043 ff., cf. *WT* 400–404, 546–547), trickery and disguise (956–958, cf. *WT passim*), cleverness and sophistry (774–776, 892–894, 941–943, 1082, cf. *Acharn.* 440–447, *Peace* 534, *WT* 5 ff., fr. 682), and encouragement of idle talk (1068–1069, 1082–1087, cf. *Clouds* 961 ff.). As we have seen, many of these are areas where comedy and Euripides overlap, a tendency not particularly appropriate for the Chair of Tragedy.

3.3 *The Individual and the* Polis*: Analysis and Emotion*

> An Englishman, a Frenchman, a Texan, and a Mexican were on an airplane when the engines began to give out. The pilot called back that unless the load was lightened, they would all crash, whereupon the Frenchman went to the hatch, cried, "*Vive la France!*" and leapt out. Ten

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poneria in defining comedy. At 921 the vocative particle suggests Euripides, although the term is usually seen as directed at Aeschylus.

95 Other than *Birds*, every extant Aristophanes play up to Euripides' death contains direct references to him, not including the numerous parodies. Euripides also appeared in *Proagon* (422; Scholiast on *Wasps* 61c), and *Dramas* (before 406), *Gerytades*, with its line "at dinner parties praising Aeschylus" (161; Rusten, 2011, 299; Butrica, 2001), and *Poetry* (if genuine) probably contained references; *Phoenician Women* and *Lemnian Women* may parody Euripides' *Phoenician Women* and *Hypsipyle* (Rusten, 2011, 312). See Storey, 2003, 327–333 for the contrast to Eupolis.

96 See Biles, 2011 and Chapter Six, section two.

> minutes later the plane was sinking again, and the pilot was just about to call back when the Englishman cried, "God save the Queen!" and leapt out. But the plane was still too heavy, and as the Texan and Mexican looked at each other, the Texan moved to the door, cried, "Remember the Alamo!" and threw out the Mexican.

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Although Aristophanes associates Euripides with the comic Dionysus in a number of ways, such as through the suggestion of sexual anomalies (49 ff.) and by opposing both to traditional heroism, the most significant ties are Dionysus' emphatic admiration of Euripides' sophistry (71–107) and their shared comic individualism, an individualism, as in the joke above, that can emerge as a dislike of self-sacrifice. The second half of the play, which raises the question of whether a tragic poet should be valued for moral influence or for skill with words, will further connect verbal dexterity and individualism, as Euripides claims that his focus on logic and analysis (*logismos*, *skepsis*, 971–979, and see 980–991) enabled the Athenians to look after their own private affairs. In contrast to Aeschylus, who is connected to the martial, the communal, and the inarticulate, the association suggests that Euripides' dexterity and the individualism it is connected to are unsuited to tragedy. The flip side is equally important. As in Dionysus' comic incomprehension (914–921, 1023–1024), what appears to matter in tragedy is not the message, but the shared emotional experience, even for those experiencing it in different ways.

Dionysus, in the first half of the play, is a typical self-seeking, opportunistic Aristophanic hero whose absurd "Don't manage (*oikei*) my mind; you have a house (*oikia*) of your own" (105) looks forward to Euripides' interest in sophistry and the private (*oikeia pragmata*, 959, 976–977).[97] Toward the end of the play, a rather different Dionysus will declare that he came looking for a tragic poet for the sake of the city (1418–1419). In the prologue, in striking contrast, he makes it abundantly clear that his desire for Euripides, stemming from his love of clever sayings, is, like the purely personal urges for sex or pea soup (55–67), purely for the sake of himself.[98]

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97 The Scholiast attributes (Euripides fr. 144: "Don't manage (*oikei*) my mind; I am sufficient for that") to *Andromache*, Matthiae to *Andromeda*, Collard et al., *Euripides*, 2.153.

98 In contrast Biles, 2011, 214–219 for Dionysus as unselfish.

The Dionysus of the first half of the play, as he fobs the dangers off onto Xanthias and appropriates the pleasures for himself, has the attitude we expect of a comic hero: every man (or god) for himself.[99] The association extends to the details of his quest. His explanation that his longing for Euripides came upon him "on shipboard, while I was reading / the *Andromeda* to myself" (552–553) contrasts his private reading to the venue the *Andromeda* was intended for, the shared experience of the Dionysia. It also suggests that his shipboard service at Arginusae was something less than diligent. Similarly, Dionysus' indignant rejection of the various forms of suicide that, Heracles suggests, could bring one to Hades (120–134) imply a hero not readily given to self-sacrifice.

But while Dionysus begins the *Frogs* as a typical comic hero, this gradually shifts, preparing us for the Dionysus of the second half, who no longer displays a love for sophistry and seems, at the very least, to favor Aeschylus as much as Euripides (see 916–917, 952–953, 1029–1030). Dionysus' concern for himself is first challenged in his encounter with the frogs, where he begins by pitting his single voice against their collective song and ends, as he conquers, in harmony with their "Brekekekekex Koax Koax" (260ff.).[100] In an image that will run throughout the play, he also learns how to row in time with others, a skill he apparently did not pick up at Arginusae.[101] Another hint at socialization occurs, amidst Dionysus' self-seeking exploits in Hades, with the entrance of the second chorus, the initiates. Here Dionysus and Xanthias begin by standing back and commenting on the choral song, as Dionysus did initially with the frogs. But as the good comic motivations of food and sex attract them (337–339, 412–415), they join the dance, a striking visual image of their integration into the community and one that prefigures Aeschylus' focus on the chorus (911–915).[102] And as the song celebrates the collective dance and sport characteristic

99 For Dionysus as the paradigmatic comic hero, Habash, 2002, 2–5.

100 On whether the frogs appear see the Scholiast on 209; Allison, 1983 arguing that they did not; Stone, 1981, 395 n. 30 for a bibliography. As Dover, *Frogs*, 177–179, the danger of disappointing audience anticipation argues against invisible frogs even in straightened circumstances (implied also by the apology for "cheapness" made by the second (!) chorus, 404–408; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 192–193).

101 Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 176; Dover, *Frogs*, 219–223; L.P.E. Parker, 1997, 464ff. on Dionysus' gradually emerging rhythm. C. Segal, 1961, 213 sees this as the beginning of Dionysus' education; Sifakis, 1971, 96 as an embryonic comic *agon*; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 12–19, 176, with the Aeacus scene and the poetry contest, as one of Dionysus' three tests. For other views, MacDowell, 1972; Slater, 2002, 186. Although Dionysus describes himself as one of the ten *epibatai* or marines onboard (for the double-entendre, Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 160), most of the audience would associate naval warfare with rowing.

102 Habash, 2002, 5–8; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 193.

of both initiates and a comic chorus, it recalls as well the role Dionysus is about to return to, as god both of the Mysteries and of the theater.[103]

This collective context also begins a focus on the city that continues through the rest of the play. The words *polis* and *polites* ("city" and "citizen"), which appear for the first time in the initiates' entry song (359, 361), will occur another twenty-seven times, ending with Pluto's final injunction to Aeschylus to "save our city" (1501).[104] The form of the song, an imitation of the "warning off" of non-Greeks and murderers who were forbidden to seek initiation, reinforces this. By teeing up an "us" in contrast to a comic "them," the chorus creates an emotional undercurrent that runs throughout, that establishes all Athenians (or at least all Athenians who have not offended Aristophanes) as in some sense kin (697–698, 701–702, and see 1487–1489).[105]

That a change occurs in Dionysus in the course of the *Frogs* has often been remarked, with many commentators, following Segal, seeing the movement from comic buffoon to civic responsibility as implying a development in Dionysus' character.[106] Such a change, however, would be anomalous, as comic characters tend to be discontinuous, and so seldom develop. Rather than shifting Dionysus' character, it seems likely that Aristophanes has shifted his role. As the play moves from heroic journey to poetic *agon*, Dionysus moves as well,

103 Dover, *Frogs*, 57–69 for the song blending "role" and "function" with *paizein* encompassing both; Slater, 2002, 187 for combining men and women "in a play that works so hard to forge a unified Athens in the face of the direst circumstances"; Stanford, *Frogs*, xli; Silk, 1980, 113–114 for lyricism set off by comic insertions; Dobrov, 2001, 148–149 for the frogs as comic vs. the initiates as tragic chorus; Dover, *Frogs*, 57–62 on the connection of seriousness and "playing" to the Mysteries, as Halliwell, 2008, 160–172. For the unusual anapests borrowed from the *parabasis*, Slater, 2002, 187; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 186–187.

104 Dionysus also adopts Athens as his own at *Frogs* 1448, if attributed to him (Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 290) and Aeschylus' "our city" (1083) seems to include Dionysus. Bierl (1991, 27–44) on Dionysus finding his "political self"; C. Segal, 1961, 213: "[Dionysus is] beginning to become aware of what comedy should be, a reflection of the solidarity and secure firmness of the community, and this is preparing him for his acceptance of the Aeschylean conception of tragedy in the second part of the play."

105 For the "warning off" see the Scholiast on 369; Isocrates, *Paneg.*4.157; Parke, 1977, 60–61; Brumfield, 1981, 194. See Hall, 1989 and Goldhill, 1986, 57ff. on citizenship as based on exclusion and Burke, 1978, 199–202 for carnival asserting solidarity through the ridicule of outsiders; Griffith, 3013, 196–199.

106 C. Segal, 1961. I agree with Segal, but see the change occurring for other reasons, as Dover, *Frogs*, 41–43; Vaio in Calder, who see a development rather of theme, in accord with comedy's usual discontinuity of character. For other views Whitman, 1964, 232; Bierl, 1991, 27–44; Habash, 2002; Biles, 2011, 211–256.

from being paired with first Heracles and then Xanthias to being a commentator on the new opposition, between the "sharp-talking" Euripides and the savage, Heracles-like Aeschylus (814–829, and see 837 ff., 899–904, 1100–1103). In the new opposition, as Aeschylus introduces the intensity proper for tragedy, Euripides, in contrast, takes over many of the comic attributes that originally belonged to Dionysus.

Aristophanes' association of individuality and verbal skill emerges most clearly in the two different criteria suggested for the poetry contest, skill and moral teaching. The desire that Dionysus initially feels for Euripides is based on the former, Euripides' "dexterity" (72) as a "potent" (*gonimos*) poet able to come up with such ingenious phrases as "sky, bedroom of Zeus" or "the foot of time" (96–100). Accordingly, we are told, ingenious instruments have been prepared to weigh and measure the poetry (796 ff., as 1368 ff.), and while Aeschylus' resistance (803–804) may be to the contest altogether, he may equally well be bridling at the kind of measure proposed. In any case, Aeschylus' attack on Euripides is based not on poetic skill, but rather on the second possible grounds for decision, moral influence (840–850, 771–783).

Given the continual choral interjections that describe Aeschylus' passion and Euripides' verbal dexterity (814–829, 895–904, 992–1003, 1100–1107), we might expect the contest to be a draw, with Euripides victorious in skill and Aeschylus in moral teaching. The distinction, it turns out, is not so clear. Aeschylus, speaking second (the usual position for the victor), begins his challenge by asking, "But so that he cannot say I am at a loss (*aporein me*)—/ answer me: for what should one admire a poet?" to which Euripides replies: "For dexterity and advice (*nouthesias*) and because we make / people (*anthropous*) better in the cities" (1006–1010).[107] Although the reply (perhaps aside from the "dexterity") should suit Aeschylus as well, the description we have just heard of Euripides' poetics (in accord with his preamble: "As to *myself*, how I am in regard to poetry, / I will say in my final remarks," 907–908) makes it clear that his idea of making people "better" differs considerably from Aeschylus'.[108] While Aeschylus focuses on war, men (*andres*, 1022, 1036, 1041, 1050), and nobility (*gennaioi*, 1011, 1014, 1031, 1050), Euripides boasts that he brought everyone into his drama, wives and slaves and young girls and old crones (947–949), and taught them to analyze and dissect (954–961, 971–979) "so that now they are more percep-

107 See Wright, 2012, 25–30 for comic ambiguity in regard to dexterity and cleverness. Stanford, *Frogs*, 161 questions the real Euripides' and Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 244 the play's Euripides' devotion to moral instruction.

108 Baldwin in Mhire and Frost, 190–193.

tive / about everything, and understand, in particular / how to manage their households / much better than before" (974–977).[109]

The contrast between what makes citizens "better" appears throughout, with Aeschylus' passion being connected to the collective and heroic (and often the inarticulately heroic) and Euripides' skill with words to individual, private affairs and a willingness to talk about anything (1052–1054). Euripides begins with his "private" gods (891, 890, 891) and household affairs and continues in his attraction to monodies (849, 944, 1330) and his view of his contest with Aeschylus as a cockfight—that is, as a fight one-on-one (861, as *Knights* 848, scholion on *Clouds* 889). His tragic crisis involves not the struggle for the city that comes up constantly in Aeschylus' verses, but an old woman losing her cockerel (1331 ff.). His students are not Aeschylus' trumpet-lance-bearded teeth-baring pine-benders (966) but Cleitophon, Thrasymachus' friend and fellow relativist in *Republic* 1, and Theramenes, who here, as throughout, embodies the ability to save oneself by shifting one's position (967–970)—exactly, as Euripides chimes in, what he encourages (971–972).

In contrast to Euripides, Aeschylus seems firmly opposed to thinking for oneself.[110] In his day, he claims, all sailors knew was how to row and shout for their grub (1073–1074), while under Euripides rich men shirk their obligations to the city (1065–1066) and sailors talk back to their leaders (1070–1076).[111]

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109 For Euripides' intellectualism vs. Aeschylus' inspiration, Lada-Richards, 1999, 234–247; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 241; Daly, 1982 for his domestic focus. The warning about democracy (951–953) may refer to his avoiding the common danger in Macedon; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 240; Dover, *Frogs*, 311. G.B. Walsh, 1984, 93 sees Euripides as divisive, as even his gods are private. Goldhill, 1986, 166 for the actual Euripides' mocking military values; Zeitlin in Revermann and Wilson, 331 for his part in "an increasing valorization of emotional expression, bordering on the sentimental, in the frame of private, individual experience."

110 Friedrich, 1980, 16; G.B. Walsh, 1984, 87 on Aeschylus' chant: "repetitive and unintelligible as language. But its virtue consists in its ability to strengthen and unite men in action" compared to Euripides' unrepetitive "correctness" of language; Sommerstein's summary of Aeschylus' final advice (*Frogs*, 291–292): "(i) that the current Athenian strategy is essentially right, (ii) that it must, however, be pursued with more single-mindedness, and above all (iii) that the way to save Athens is by fighting, not by talking"; Redfield, 1962, 121: "He chooses Aeschylus, because Aeschylus asserts the power of the community to dominate Sparta and Alcibiades, its enemies abroad and its dangerous citizens at home. Aeschylus speaks to the power of the communal order."

111 So that the Paralus, no longer under the rowers' control, sails (like Athens) haphazardly (1076). Depending on one's political bent this could refer either to new corruption or to the ship's traditional democratic bent, as in 411. As Aristophanes says, this is no time for creating discord.

The difference runs throughout, from the choral clapping which so delighted Dionysus (1029–1030) to Aeschylus' overall focus on war, and on hoplite warfare in particular, where success comes only when citizens stand together: "breathing spears and lances and casques with white crests / and helmets and greaves and spirits of seven oxhides" (1016–1017).[112] The phrase Aeschylus appends to Euripides' prologues—"and lost his little bottle of oil"—whether sexual or not, has a clearly private focus in contrast to the line appended to Aeschylus' verses: "Aiai, stricken, will not you advance to their succor?" (1208 ff., 1265 ff.).[113] Even Aeschylus' gigantic compound adjectives, mocked by Euripides as "horse-cliff phrases" (929, 1004, 1056–1057, and see 841–842) bring things into a whole, while Euripides' "word by word" analysis (*kat' epos*, 802, 1407) and "subtle word shavings" (1819) divide them into their individual parts. Euripides' forte is monodies; Aeschylus' individuals stand out by virtue of their silence; the chorus, who sing together, carry the burden of the play (911–915).[114]

But while Aeschylus' tendency toward the collective and Euripides' toward the individual may seem to be tilting the balance, in the end neither this, nor a decision based on technical skill, nor even Aeschylus' (literal) outweighing of Euripides with weighty concepts like rivers, death, chariots, and corpses (1382–1404) proves decisive. Nor, it seems, does the factor that Dionysus introduces now, advice to the city, since Dionysus' inability to decide after the first round of advice—"since the one spoke wisely (*sophōs*), the other clearly (*saphōs*)" (1434)—largely echoes his indecision just before—"since the first I consider wise (*sophos*), while the other I enjoy" (1413).[115] Nor does it seem likely that

112 As 1021–1022, 1040–1042 and, with a more Homeric tinge, "nothing but Scamanders and moats and shields / with griffin-eagles on them of beaten bronze" (929–930). Edmunds, 1987, 24–27 on good order and harmony as martial qualities; C. Segal, 1961, 223–226 on community and communal dances. For Aeschylus and war, Lefkowitz, 1981, 68–70 and 159 on his epitaph and *Republic* 374a; Vernant, 1980, 19–44; Goldhill in Winkler and Zeitlin, 104–114 for "the way in which citizenship and military values were inherently intertwined in fifth-century Athens" (109) as in the arming ceremony at the City Dionysia.

113 For the great *lecythion* debate Whitman, 1969; Griffith, 1970 arguing for a phallic reference; Henderson, 1972 arguing that the actual object was used on stage as a weapon.

114 See Taplin, 1972; Flintoff, 1983, in a different context; Knox in Easterling and Knox, 86 on the actual Euripides' "transference of much of the musical performance of the chorus (*stasimon*) to individual actors (*monody*) and the comparative detachment of the choral odes proper from dramatic context"; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 237 for "horse-cliff" (929) indicating size.

115 For the debate over which is which (in performance easily resolved—or not—by a gesture), Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 283, 286; Stanford, *Frogs*, 194; Slater, 2002, 203; Goldhill, 1991, 218.

the second round turns the scales, since, while Aeschylus' advice suggests, as one might expect, a return to Pericles, Themistocles, and the good old days, Euripides' seems to follow that of Aristophanes himself in the *parabasis*, suggesting that the cities have mixed up which citizens they should trust and use and which not (718–737, 1455–1456).[116]

Given this mix-up of poetic criteria, it is worth looking at the way Dionysus makes his decision as a clue to the decision he makes:

> Dion: Thus will be my decision (*krisis*) between you two,
> for I will choose the one my soul (*psyche*) desires.
> Eurip: Remembering now the gods to whom you swore
> that you would bring me home, so choose your friends (*philoi*).
> Dion: "My tongue swore …"—I choose Aeschylus.
> 1467–1471

Dionysus' half quotation leaves Euripides and the audience to complete the line (*Hippolytus* 612, also referred to at 101–102): "My tongue swore; my heart (*phren*) is unsworn." Dionysus follows not *logos*, but his inner nature. As Dover has pointed out, this does not mean that the decision is irrational, but that, like Pluto's and Persephone's ability to tell who is a god simply by being one (670–671), the decision is based not on reason and analysis but on an instinctive sense of what is one's own.[117]

Dionysus' decision suggests that the most important distinction between Euripides and Aeschylus may be neither poetic skill nor making the citizens "better," but rather Euripides' focus on analysis, and Aeschylus' on emotion.[118] The distinction appears, for example, not in *what* the poets advise, but in *how*,

116 See Baldwin in Mhire and Frost, 193; Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 14–17 on the two criteria; Bowie, 1993: "The constant slippage from one criteria of literary and civic excellence to another leaves the question of who has won constantly deferred" (250).

117 Dover, *Frogs*, 20–21 and in Sommerstein et al., 455–456; Lada-Richards, 1999, 217–223 as a carnivalesque reversal expressing conviction; Biles, 2011, 254–255. For *phren* as what is deepest, Thumiger, 2007, 72–73; *Ajax* 481–482; for *kardia*, *Medea* 1360; for Aeschylus joining the two, Podlecki in Cropp et al., 1986, 40; Handley, 1956, 214–215. The judgment recalls Heracles' claim that Dionysus truly knows what Euripides is (104).

118 G.B. Walsh, 1984, 87–88 on Dionysus judging by the soul, which Aeschylus addresses, not the intellect; Woodbury in Cropp et al., 1986, 245–246 and in Pucci, 1983, 184 on Euripidean and Aeschylean composition as of tongue vs. *phren*: "The distinction made in the play is one between a purely linguistic conception of poetic diction, as of language in general, and a very different idea, drawn from Greek tradition, whereby language is held to be expressive of an inner ethos."

with Euripides jumping in (1453) with his antitheses and paradoxes (1427 ff., 1451) and Aeschylus asking how the city feels (1424, 1443–1444, 1454) and attempting to keep silent (1461).

It is by no means clear, in contrast, that the poets' opinions are all that crucial. The "positions" that they hold, for example, are notably contradictory, with Aeschylus' heroic ideals (associated, in particular, with Achilles, 912, 992, 1041, 1264–1266, and contrast 1400) hardly a good fit for his collective values, while Euripides' "democratic" tendencies are explicitly challenged (951–953). The same is true of their initial advice, where Euripides' advice, rejecting Alcibiades, seems to reject his particular follower, Theramenes as well: "I hate a citizen who to benefit his fatherland / is slow, but greatly to harm her swift, / one full of resource for himself, but for the city helpless" (1427–1429, cf. 967–970), while Aeschylus', favoring Alcibiades, uses the idea of raising a "lion in the city" to the opposite effect of the image used in the *Oresteia* (1430–1432, *Agam.* 717–736).[119]

In a recent work, Matthew Wright makes the telling point that, even in comedy, if drama had actually been about giving good advice to the city, as comedy claims, one would expect comic poets to attack one another for giving bad advice, an accusation which is, in fact, never made.[120] As we saw in Chapter Three, Aristophanes' own plays are singularly lacking in actual advice, while the "teaching" (or "directing," 1019, 1026, and see 1035) that Aeschylus boasts of is limited to inspiring valor through his *Seven against Thebes* and *Persians*, a view that is itself, as Wright points out, as simplistic as seeing the *Works and Days* as about times to plow, or the *Iliad* as about military tactics (1030–1036).[121]

On the other hand, it is worth thinking about Olivier's *Henry V*. The movie, made in 1944, was partly funded by the British government and dedicated to the "Commandos and Airborne Troops of Great Britain, the spirit of whose ancestors it has humbly attempted to recapture." That *Henry V* is hardly a pro-war play (as was brought out in Branagh's 1989 version), or that it describes England's victory over the French, British allies in World War II, seems not to have been a problem. It is the spirit that matters.

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119 The approval may reflect Aeschylus' association with the Mysteries and Alcibiades' enabling, two years earlier, the first overland procession to Eleusis in years (Griffith, 2013, 206). For divisions of the two poets' opinions, complicated by the two productions, see Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 23; Dover, *Frogs*, 373–376.

120 Wright, 2012, 17–24.

121 Wright 22–23. Plato's *Ion* points to and punctures a similarly simplistic view of poetry as "useful."

The unity invoked by the *Frogs* is not so much of understanding as of emotion, more (in our terms) of the heart than of the head. It lies behind Dionysus letting his *psyche* decide on the best poet to return with, behind Aeacus' decision to leave the choice between Dionysus and Xanthias to Pluto and Persephone, and behind Aristophanes' consistent linking of citizenship to kinship, a link reinforced by the unusual and persistent use (particularly in relation to Aeschylus) of words linked to kinship, such as *gennaios* and *gennadas*, for what is "noble" or "gentlemanly."[122] And, ironically, it lies behind what may be the one concrete piece of political advice that Aristophanes ever gave, that the Athenians should accept "willingly, all people as our kin / and citizens enfranchised, who fight together with us at sea" (701–702).[123]

The *Frogs* thus shows us why the city needs tragedy: because it is tragedy whose intense emotional focus makes the city feel what is its own. It is true, of course, that Aristophanes also slips in a somewhat ironic suggestion that the "kinship" of the newly enfranchised slaves, for example, may be based more on what is useful than on what is bred in the bone (701–702, and see 720).[124] He also could be thought to imply, in Aeschylus' boasts about molding the citizens, that tragedy can show the city its own largely because it has also created the city's sense of what is its own. This notion, however, Aristophanes leaves (mostly) for another time. As in the joke about the man asked if he believed in infant baptism, who replied: "Believe in it? I've seen it done!" the fundamental distinction between "us" and "them," the distinction that can enable Athens to survive and so bring life out of death, may be largely a fiction, but that is no reason in Aristophanes' world not to cleave to it. The last choral interlude thus reminds us that real understanding belongs to Aeschylus and enables him to return for the good of his fellow citizens, his kin, and his friends

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122 For *gennaios*, 97, 356, 378, 615, 1011, 1019, 1031, 1050 and W.G. Arnott, 26–27 in Hanslik et al. as Euripidean; *gennadas*, 640, 738, 739, 997 and Dover, *Frogs*, 46; the more usual *eugeneis*, 727 and *genos* and *sungeneis* of kinship 698, 701, 1266; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1390b21–23 for *gennaios* as abiding by *physis*; *Hippol.* 1452 as "legitimate"; Blundell, 1988, 137; Rose, 1976, 97 for the persuasive use of kinship terms.

123 The Hypothesis to *Frogs* cites Dicaearchus on the honors given Aristophanes for the good advice in the *parabasis* of *Frogs*, perhaps ironically, considering that the exiles recalled by the edict of Patrocleides helped establish the Thirty Tyrants. See Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 21–23 and in Sommerstein et al., 461–476; W.G. Arnott, 1991.

124 The "new gold" of *Frogs* 720 must refer to the enfranchised slaves, commended at 695–696. In contrast, Stanford, *Frogs*, 134 sees this as the rule of the oligarchs; Dover, *Frogs*, 281–282, due to his "old is good, new is bad" view of Aristophanes, as an awkward second reference to traditional citizens. On the coinage see Sommerstein, *Frogs*, 219–220.

(*philoi*) (1485–1490). Mere verbal dexterity, like Socrates' (or, we can understand, Euripides') leaves out "the most important element of the tragedian's art" (1491–1495) and will never save Athens.

The reason that tragedy, and not comedy, could provide the single-mindedness Athens needed in 405 appears throughout the *Frogs*, as well as throughout the extant plays of Aristophanes. The reason is the ambivalent view of reality that characterized Old Comedy. In the *Women at the Thesmophoria*, as we have seen, the confusion that constitutes most of the play stems from the ease with which "women" and "men" are made and unmade at the change of a costume. In *Frogs*, where the costume changes point to a confusion not only of master and slave, but even of divine and mortal, the arbitrariness of categories becomes even more extreme. A tragedy such as *Antigone* can make an absolute division between what belongs to the gods below and what belongs to the gods above (1064 ff.).[125] In the *Frogs*, all that is necessary for the dead to come to life is that Dionysus decide which poet to choose (1467–1468), which means essentially that the Athenians decide who to restage. Similarly, although Dionysus and Xanthias have returned to their proper places as master and slave, Aristophanes' reminders of the enfranchisement that followed Arginusae make it clear that "master" and "slave" are far from absolute categories. And finally, the absurdity of Aeacus' test, in which god and mortal equally "prove" their immortality through an equally feigned imperviousness to pain, reminds us that the gods, at least as they appear on the Athenian stage, are not all that different from the men who created them.[126]

The artificiality carries over to genre distinctions as well. The rules of the Athenian theater may have divided tragedy and comedy, but, as Euripides' experiments in tragicomedy made clear, the boundaries were purely manmade. Aristophanes' response was not therefore to abandon the distinction. It was rather to point out that if the opposition of comedy and tragedy is based only on human convention, so is every other distinction that gives order to human life.

Perhaps because of Athens's situation, the theme of flux is particularly pervasive in *Frogs*. The theme emerges in Empusa's shifting shapes (289 ff.), Theramenes' chameleon nature (540, 967),[127] the recurrent image of a ship at sea

125 C. Segal, 1981, 152–206 for inversions in the *Antigone* and 171 for this passage.

126 The Melian dialogue: "Of men we know and of gods we believe that everywhere by nature and necessity they rule where they have the power to" (Thuc. 5.105) gives the idea a more worrying slant.

127 Even in references to Dionysus' *kothornoi*, soft boots worn on either foot, which gave Theramenes his nickname. For Theramenes at Arginusae, Xenophon *Hellenica* 1.7.8; Hunt, 2001;

in a storm (306, 664, 822–825, 847–848, 997–1003), and in the battle recalled by that image, where slaves became free and victory turned into the disaster of Athens's executing her own generals. The sudden appearance of a completely new chorus creates another source of instability, as does the audience, which in the address of the chorus moves between being wisest "in nature" (700, 1115) and being fools (705, 734).

This persistent sense of instability affects even the play's treatment of death. The play ends, as an Eleusinian play should, with the emergence of life out of death. However, Dionysus' initial identification of the audience with the inhabitants of Hades (276–277), his Euripidean reply to Euripides—"Who knows if life is death / and breathing dining, and sleep a woolly blanket?" (1082, 1477–1478)—and Pluto's suggestion that a number of those currently in the audience might do better in Hades (1504–1514) suggest that this is not simply a one-way street. Within the world of comedy, where gods contemplate suicide (120 ff.), corpses protest that they'd rather be alive (177), and dead men face execution (1012), not even the emergence of life out of death is a sure thing.

The underlying flux of the *Frogs* has usually been taken as a sign of Aristophanes' hopelessness. It is important to remember, though, that he did not know, as we do, that the war was all but over. Aristophanes had lived through the aftermath of the Sicilian Expedition. He had seen Athens succeed against impossible odds before. However disastrously the Athenians had behaved after Arginusae, Sparta, and not Athens, had sued for peace. And finally, despair was not likely to help him take first prize. *Frogs*, rather unusually, allows for the importance of tragedy and its ability to create an emotional intensity. Its sense of instability, however, rather than expressing Aristophanes' hopelessness, may simply demonstrate the place where comedy is the best interpreter.

If the city needs tragedy, it needs comedy as well, and not least because comedy can point out tragedy's foibles. As we have seen, the *Frogs*' running ridicule of tragedy culminates in Dionysus' complaint that he cannot choose, because one of the tragedians has spoken wisely and the other clearly (1434, and see 1445). The joke lies in the suggestion that tragedy is profound largely (like Vortex in the *Clouds*) because it is unintelligible.[128] As in the *Women at the Thesmophoria*'s portrayal of tragedy swallowing up everything it meets, the emotion of tragedy moves all before it. This, of course, is exactly why it can

for Dionysus as a chameleon figure, Stanford, *Frogs*, xxix–xxx and this book's Conclusion. It is not clear if *kothornoi* were identified as actor's boots in the fifth century, as later, as Gould in Easterling and Knox, 26.

128 Nietzsche (*Birth of Tragedy*, sect. 11) also feels that Euripides killed tragedy by making it intelligible.

effect the emotional unity that Aristophanes refers to. It is also, presumably, why the audience of the *Oresteia* failed to notice, as Euripides' Electra points out, that sister and brother do not necessarily wear the same shoe size or have the same color hair (*LB* 168 ff.; *Electra* 524 ff.).

As is evident in the first lines of *Frogs*—"Shall I tell one of the usual jokes, master? / One of the ones the audience always laughs at?"—comedy does not suffer from a lack of self-scrutiny. While it takes delight in pointing out the posturing and artificiality of others, it takes equal delight in pointing out the posturing and artificiality of itself. The distinction helps explain a paradox in the play. According to Aristophanes, Euripides' verbal dexterity, constant analysis, and lowlife characters corrupt his audience. In contrast, as many a *parabasis* points out, Aristophanes' verbal dexterity, constant analysis, and lowlife characters make his audience into better and wiser citizens.[129]

The reason seems to be, according to Aristophanes, that while both Euripides and Aristophanes instill a critical attitude into their audience, only Aristophanes also instills a critical attitude toward his own critical attitude.[130] Aristophanes' joke on tragedy simply takes tragedy at its word. If tragic drama is, as it pretends to be, the only reality in town, there is no distinction between characters, playwright, and audience. Thus, since characters = playwright = audience, great characters like those created by Aeschylus must be produced by a great playwright and render the audience that identifies with them great (1058–1062), and villainous characters must be produced by a villain like Euripides and bring out villainy in the audience (781, 1015, 1053, 1456).[131] Comedy, in contrast, reminds the audience that it is watching a play. Unlike Euripides, Aristophanes can make his audience critical without fear, because the point of the criticism is not only to laugh along with the hero's *poneria*, but also, and equally, to laugh at it.

It is, presumably, also because of comedy's self-consciousness that, from Lamachus in the *Acharnians* to the *Lysistrata* to the decidedly comic aspects of Aeschylus in the *Frogs* (and on, to Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* or Shakespeare's Fal-

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129 As *Acharnians*, 634 ff., *Wasps* 1015 ff., *Peace* 734 ff.

130 McClure 1999, 226: "Finally, the opening scene of the *Thes.* forges a link between tragic poets and politicians: both use costume and rhetoric to deceive their audiences, in contrast to the comic poet, who, by continually revealing the mechanics of the play, illuminates the truth." This is also the primary thesis of Slater, 2002 and see Foley, 1988, 44.

131 As Plato, *Republic* 605 b ff., on the soul taking on the color of what it experiences, like the dyer's hand (as Clay, 2000, 120 after Shakespeare, Sonnet 111: "And almost thence my nature is subdu'd / To what it works in, like the dyer's hand"); Blondell, 2002, 80–112 for the danger and Plato's attempt to avoid it.

staff or *M*A*S*H*), comedy finds it hard to take the pomp and ceremony of war very seriously.[132] For the emotional stirring that leads human beings to abandon their self-interest, even to the point of sacrificing their lives, Aristophanes had to turn to tragedy.[133] This is not because tragedy teaches, or is even primarily about, self-sacrifice. It is rather because tragedy, and for Aristophanes, Aeschylus rather than Euripides, is about necessity, and can inspire us with a terrifying and humbling sense of the whole. But there is still a role for comedy. Where the audience is inspired with a sense of the whole it is even more critical (at least in Aristophanes' view) that someone mention that that whole is one we have invented for ourselves. The *Frogs* promises a reversal that is no less than that of the Mysteries, the emergence of life out of death. Tragedy can accomplish this by creating from its audience a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Comedy, meanwhile, quietly reminds us that those parts matter too, for the parts, if not the equal of the city as a whole, are still our own personal and quite individual lives.

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132 As Reckford, 1987, 183: "the sausage—or the Phallus—is mightier than the spear." Falstaff's view of honor: "What is honor? A word. What is that word Honor? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died a Wednesday" (1 Henry 4.5.1) is echoed by Stephen Dedalus: "You die for your country. Suppose. … But I say: Let my country die for me. Up to the present it has done so." (*Ulysses* 15.4471). See Meltzer, 1994, 255 for a similar view in the *Helen*.

133 Nichols, 1998, 183–186 for Aeschylus' ability, unlike that of logic and self-mockery, to persuade one to die for one's country; similarly, in regard to satyrs, Hoffman in Goldhill and Osborne, 1994, 28–51.

Conclusion: The Dionysia's Many Voices

> Human freedom for Needleman consisted of being aware of the absurdity of life. "God is silent," he was fond of saying, "now if we can only get Man to shut up."
>
> WOODY ALLEN[1]

•••

> A man walked into a bar and riveted the attention of the customers when he took off his hat—revealing a large frog that had become permanently attached to his scalp. "Oh boy," said the bartender, "you sure do have a problem there, guy." "You know it," said the frog. "I've tried everything, but I just cannot get this guy off my rear end."

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As in the jokes above, the speaking voice is not always as unambiguous as it might seem. That complexity multiplies a thousandfold onstage when the complex identities of the speakers meet the complex identities of the listeners. As scholars have recently come to emphasize, it is impossible to speak of the Athenian theater audience as a simple and cohesive whole. A multiplicity of audience members means a multiplicity of responses, and this, quite strikingly, seems built into the dramatic texts that survive. Nor is this simply an ancient Greek version of Sondheim's "something for everyone."[2] Rather, Greek drama seems calculated to spark varying and ambiguous responses within individual audience members. And, as we have seen in the course of this book, not only is this true of the plays, it seems also to have been built into the dramatic festivals

1 *Side Effects*, 6 (New York, 1981).

2 Stephen Sondheim, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. For other "polyphonic" elements, Wilson in Carter, 23: "No matter how forcefully any play or set of plays seems to endorse any particular ideological position, the competitive format of Athenian tragedy always militates against monochromatic or homogenous visions"; Griffith, 1995 and 1998 on class-identification and Carter, 2007, 48–49 on nothing preventing lower-class audience members from identifying with Orestes or Oedipus. See also Chapter Four, section four for the audience addressed both as a collective and as individuals.

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themselves, in particular the City Dionysia, which served as the imaginative focus for the celebration of drama.[3]

A fifth-century Athenian participated in the City Dionysia (or Lenaia) with the expectation of experiencing tragedy, in which the human is seen within a greater whole. And he (or she) went expecting to experience comedy, in which the human appears as radically autonomous. Plays such as the *Oedipus Tyrannos*, *Trojan Women*, and *Philoctetes* revealed the human constrained by the necessity of the *polis*, the cosmos, and the gods. Plays such as the *Dionysalexandros*, *Acharnians*, and *Birds* revealed the human as bound in by the artificial constraints of political charlatans and purely anthropomorphic divinities. The festivalgoer understood that as the divine voice was brought onstage through oracles, it represented the irreducible necessity that determines human life. And he (or she) understood that behind the oracle was invariably a human being manufacturing the divine voice for his own profit. In the world of the Dionysia, the social shell could crack under the inner drive of an Ajax or a Medea. Or the social shell could be the whole picture, as the comic hero shifted with the world around him. On the stage the material world was endowed with a deeper meaning and significance—or it was there purely to be tripped over. One was the view of tragedy, the other of comedy. The point was not to choose, but to experience the truths of both visions, polar opposites as they were, within the single overarching whole of the festival.

Contrary responses seem built into individual plays as well. The conflicting responses of the *Agamemnon*'s chorus to the death of the king seem designed to provoke a similar uncertainty in the audience. The emotional impact of the *Persians* is, as we have seen, in direct opposition to the ordinary response of its audience. And, as has often been pointed out, the central figures in many tragedies, such as Ajax, Oedipus, and Philoctetes, seem designed to create conflicting responses of admiration, pity, distance, and dread, a conflict made even more intense in the case of heroines like Aeschylus' Clytemnestra or Euripides' Medea.[4] In a quite different way, but with a similar effect, we have

3 Hall, 2010, 60; Wilson in Carter, 34: "The enormous ambition of the Athenian City Dionysia hugely magnified the reserves of prestige that were available to be fought over"; 26–29 on participation, 32–43 on finance. The Lenaia seems to have followed the example of the Dionysia, as in its late addition of tragedy; see Storey, 2003, 81; Storey and Allan, 2005, 17–18 for Eratosthenes' judgment that the Lenaia was the "lesser" festival; Pickard-Cambridge, 1968, 57–59, pointing out (57) that the City Dionysia could be called "the Dionysia" simply. For drama performed in the demes see Chapter One, section one.

4 For conflicts within Sophocles' chorus see Burton, 1980, 3. For varied emotional responses to Ajax and Medea, Chapter Four, section two.

seen that Aristophanes' comedies often aim at an ambivalence that leaves the spectator with two equally justified, but opposite, views of the comic hero. In this way Greek drama seems to take a radical approach to the multiplicity of its audience, by recognizing as well the possibility of multiple viewpoints within the individual spectator.

It seems likely that this tendency in Athenian drama toward multiple, even opposite responses both encouraged and was encouraged by the same quality within the festivals. Given a culture centered in oppositions such as *nomos* and *physis*, form and matter, word and deed, god and beast, it is not surprising that the Athenian stage developed the pairing that has come down to us as comedy and tragedy, particularly in the fertile conditions we have seen. What is extraordinary is how far this opposition was taken, extending both the cosmic and the carnivalesque view of the individual and society through nearly all the concerns that occupied Athens in the fifth century.

As we have seen, there also seems to have developed a connecting thread, an opposition of freedom and necessity. And either of the opposites also contained its own complexity. Tragedy, overall, reflected a vision of necessity, but a necessity deeply at odds with human striving, while comedy reflected a vision of human freedom, but a freedom grounded in nothing beyond the human. The tragic city was bound in a greater cosmos, accommodating or hostile to human concerns, while the comic city was a purely human and self-contradictory creation. Tragic characters strive for identity; comic characters are completely self-determining, but also radically inconsistent. And where the mythic focalization of tragedy revealed an often terrible gap between divine and human understanding, comedy reflected a world in which the human, having no greater authority to give it meaning, has to create one.

The audience was not asked to choose between these views, between freedom and necessity, or between comedy and tragedy, any more than they were asked to choose between *nomos* and *physis* or between word and deed. At the City Dionysia, as later at the Lenaia, tragedy competed with tragedy and comedy with comedy. There was no competition between the genres. In fact the opposite is true. In the tragic competition the tragic trilogy and satyr play were judged together, as a whole. So also in the festival, the contradictory views of comedy and tragedy together comprised a single celebration of Dionysus, himself the god of contradictions.[5] Just as the many different, contradic-

5 Goldhill in Winkler and Zeitlin, 78: "But the two faces of Dionysus form the one festival: the tensions and ambiguities that tragedy and comedy differently set in motion, the tensions and ambiguities that arise in the transition from tragedy to comedy, all fall under the aegis

tory responses of the audience members constituted a whole, and in the City Dionysia a whole made concrete in the judgment of the competitions, so the multiple and mutually exclusive visions of comedy and tragedy were also, and nonetheless, the opposing elements of a single experience.[6]

A similar situation obtains when we turn to the political side of the festival. Of the two primary occasions on which an Athenian saw drama, the Lenaia and the City Dionysia, the Lenaia was both the more intimate, performed for a primarily Athenian audience, and the simpler, producing only comedy and tragedy without either satyr drama or dithyramb. The City Dionysia, in contrast, was the showcase of Athens, performed for an international as well as Athenian audience, and containing many more elements, a number of them explicitly political.[7] Appreciation of this has led many scholars to reconsider Greek drama in light of the political nature of the festival.[8] An equally valuable approach, however, might be to reconsider the political nature of the festival in light of the relation of comedy and tragedy that formed its centerpiece.

That the City Dionysia celebrated Athens is clear. The initial procession, reenacting the god's arrival from the small deme of Eleutherae, recalled the inclusion of the formerly Boeotian town within Attica and so the *synoikismos*, or joining of the Attic towns with Athens, originally attributed to Theseus.[9] The organization of the dithyrambic contest around Cleisthenes' ten tribes and the requirement that participants in the dithyrambic, tragic, and comic choruses be citizens reinforced the festival's Athenian character, while political cere-

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of the one god, the divinity of illusion and change, paradox and ambiguity, release and transgression." For other views of Dionysus bringing together opposites Goldhill, 1986, 78; Otto, 1965; Carpenter and Faraone, eds., 1993, and esp. Henrichs in Carpenter and Faraone, 13–43; Riu, 1999; Rehm, 1994.

6 In this light, even the doubling of the festivals, the City Dionysia being international and political, the Lenaia smaller and more domestic, reflects the double nature of the god that both celebrated.

7 See, for example, for the presentation of tribute, the scholia on *Acharn.* 502–506; on the procession of war orphans, Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 3.154, on both, Isocrates, *On the Peace* 8.82. Carter, 2007, 40–43 unnecessarily opposes this view to Goldhill's original account (1987). Hall in Silk, 295–309 sees in Aristotle's *Poetics* a separation of drama and the city that had not existed before. For further sources on the political nature of drama and its implications, see Chapter Three, section one.

8 A view far from universally accepted, as Heath in Cairns, 2006, 253–282; Griffin, 1998 and in response Seaford, 2000; Goldhill, 2000; Rhodes, 2003, 111 and Griffin, Goldhill and Heath disputing the analogy of a sports match. Carter, 2007, 21–63 and Goldhill, 2000, 43 give a survey of views.

9 Parke, 1977, 126–127; Rehm, 1994, 14.

monies such as the bringing in of tribute by the allies, the arming of young men whose fathers had been killed in war, and the awarding of civic honors promoted a sense of pride in the city. Even a much less explicitly political event, the sacrifice that opened the festival, was made by the ten generals, the city's most important elected leaders.[10] Moreover, the presence in the front seats of the generals, the Council responsible for running the Assembly, and the officials who directed and put on the festival itself served as a reminder that the festival was provided by the city for the citizens.[11] All of this clearly set tragedy and comedy in a context that celebrated the communal life of the city.

A holistic approach to the Dionysia might, accordingly, be thought to explain Greek drama as politically motivated, perhaps in a "bread and circuses" kind of way, as the theoric fund, which allowed poorer citizens to attend the festival, seems to imply.[12] But rather than explaining Greek drama, a recognition of the festival's political nature only makes it more problematic, since both tragedy and comedy, in their different ways, seem more to challenge than to uphold the political basis of the festival.[13] Nor can we solve the difficulty by deciding whether the political celebrations were introduced as a response to the drama or the dramatists responded to the celebrations. However the tension began, the officials who chose the plays did not attempt to resolve it by selecting properly "patriotic" material. Instead, apparently seeing this as the nature of the festival, they accepted and funded plays that seem, if anything, to increasingly challenge the communal values of the city.

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10 These events are usually seen as in place by the second half of the fifth century; Plutarch, *Cimon* 8.7–9 dates the generals' sacrifice to Cimon's time as *strategos*. In contrast Rhodes, 2003, 111–112, in answer to Goldhill, 2000, sees the parade of war orphans predating the democracy, and points out that the first known granting of honors in the theater dates to the last decade of the fifth century.

11 At the cost, as Rhodes (2003, 110), of instituting an extremely non-democratic seating arrangement.

12 For the various controversies over the theoric fund, Rhodes, 2003, 110–111; Sommerstein and Wilson, both in Pelling, 1997; Wilson in Revermann, 2008, 95; Walton in McDonald and Walton, 298–301 and for the ancient sources, Rusten, 2011, 405–407.

13 Mastronarde, 2010, 15–25; Carter, 2007, 6–7, 158–160; Burian in Carter, 2011; Goldhill, 1987 and 2009, 21: "the shaky ability of characters to predict and understand their own narratives, and the shaky ability of the audience fully to understand the ironies of the language articulated in front of them, holds up a mirror to the audience in the theatre—a mirror which gives an uncomfortable view of the audience's political role as judging, evaluating citizens." More specifically, Rhodes, 2003 argues against claims (as Wilson, 2000b; Goldhill, 2000, 40) that the Dionysia supported specifically democratic values, or that the questioning implied by drama was particularly democratic.

The political ceremonies of the City Dionysia seem, in short, to have been in tension with the drama. All aspects of the city seem liable, in one play or another, to questioning. Pericles' claim that the good of the citizens depends on the good of the city (Thuc. 2.60) is radically undermined when expressed as Creon's opinion in the *Antigone* (175 ff.). The idea that the city always persists, despite the fall of its rulers,[14] is countered by Euripides' depictions of the fall of Troy, most spectacularly in the *Trojan Women*, which ends with the death throes of the city itself. Eupolis' *Golden Age* (fr. 316) mocks the ideal of free speech, and even the *demos* or people is directly held up for ridicule in Aristophanes' *Knights*, regardless of the Old Oligarch's assertion that the people themselves were always held free of blame.[15]

In other words, a study of the City Dionysia in its political aspect does not uncover a single deeper meaning to the festival, but rather reveals, once more, a tension between opposite meanings. In its political celebrations the festival recalled the vital place of the city in the life of the individual. In its drama it questioned the fundamental values of both individual and city. I suspect that the final effect was neither a realization that the city must be paramount, nor disillusion and a rejection of the political, but rather a deeper awareness of the tensions inherent in life within the *polis*.

The tension between necessity and freedom that we have seen throughout this book was also one basic to the City Dionysia. This is far from surprising, since the opposition, in various forms, runs through Greek thought as a whole. In Homer the heroes' striving for self-definition, particularly in the form of *kleos* or fame, is played out against a constant awareness of *moira*, both as death and as fate. In both Herodotus and Thucydides, in their radically different ways, individual lives, motivated by fear, advantage, and honor (Thuc. 1.75–76), are set against the overall sweep of history. Plato, in the *Symposium*, will even use the dramatic forms of comedy and tragedy themselves, in the persons of Aristophanes and Agathon, to characterize the realms of being and becoming, *logos* and the irrational, wisdom and ignorance, that *eros* and philosophy move between.[16]

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14 Compare Carter, 2007, 7–8, 73–78 and for this view in Seaford, see Chapter Three, section two.

15 The Old Oligarch 2.18; Henderson in Winkler and Zeitlin; Rusten, 2011, 88; Rosenbloom, 2002, 287 and for further references. Halliwell, 2008, 252 sees an "irreducibly ambiguous" relation to politics in "a performance for democratic audiences that celebrates, as much as anything else, the (comic) possibility of 'uncrowning' democracy itself with the power of laughter."

16 For Plato's use of these oppositions see Wardy, 2002, Clay, 1975.

Both freedom and necessity are also fundamental to the Dionysia. In regard to freedom, although the god of the festival, Dionysus Eleuthereus, gained his name from the deme of Eleutherae rather than from the adjective *eleutheros*, "free," the association of the festival with freedom seems inevitable.[17] On its political side the festival celebrated the power of Athens, and so also her freedom and the freedom she was able to give her citizens. On the side of *komos* it celebrated a more individual freedom, which, in freedom of speech and celebration of agency, could parallel political freedom, but which could also, in its license, conflict with it.[18] For the festival was also an expression of necessity. The delivery of tribute made it clear that Athenian power and freedom derived from the necessity imposed on the allies, while the arming of the war-orphans displayed the city's care for its citizens, but also the sacrifices that the city demanded. The opposition was well suited to the festival. Dionysus is a god of freedom, but he is equally, as we have seen, a god of necessity, "the most terrible and the most gentle to human beings" (*Bacchae* 861). And the city as well, while it is both the creator and only guarantee of freedom for its citizens, grants a freedom always accompanied by constraint.

Of the two forms of drama introduced into the Dionysia, one was imbued with epic and its concern with *moira* and the other was steeped in the insouciant worldview of *komos*. As the Dionysia incorporated both freedom and necessity, they were natural components, even though their development into a binary pair may have been largely by chance. This does not mean, however, that their concerns are not connected. Athenian tragedy requires a presupposition of freedom; there is nothing "tragic" (in the modern sense) in the necessity that governs billiard balls. Similarly, as we have seen, the sheer self-assertion explored in comedy has the apparently paradoxical result not of freeing us from necessity, but of returning us to the realm of the purely physical. The reason is not that difficult to see. In undermining the grip of every sort of necessity, of the city, of the gods, of an inner nature, or even of simple logic or consistency, the body, and with it the pure necessity of the physical, is all that remains to define the "self" that is doing the determining.[19]

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17 Rehm, 1994, 15: "As the name Eleutherae is extremely close to *eleutheria*, 'freedom,' Athenians probably felt that the new cult was particularly appropriate for celebrating their own political liberation and democratic reforms"; Halliwell, 2008, 206–214.

18 Halliwell, 2008, 215–219, 235–242 on the link, and the tension, between *parrhesia* and comic *aischrologia*.

19 Similarly, Dr. Johnson refuted Berkeley's claim that the human mind constitutes the universe for itself by kicking a large stone "with mighty force" (Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, bk. 3). One hopes he was wearing stout boots. For Aristophanes' defiance of logic,

Both genres thus deal with the tension between individual self-assertion and constraint, whether the necessity is that of a greater cosmic whole or that enforced by Scythian archers.[20] And on neither side does this imply an unproblematic resolution. A tragedy such as *Oedipus Tyrannos* may show us Oedipus not as the self-formed man he believed himself, but as determined within an inexorable and uncontrollable divine nexus. Our sympathy is nonetheless with Oedipus. A comedy such as *Birds* may show us human beings conquering both nature and the gods, and *Frogs* the conquest even of death and time. We are nonetheless left with the absurdity that comic necessity is surmountable because it is of our own making, and that the most basic obstacle to our peace and prosperity is ourselves.

In Athens both lessons had a direct and practical application. Although in Chapter Three I distinguished the "political" as it involves human beings living in a *polis* from the political as it involves day-to-day government, the two, in fifth-century Athens, were necessarily intertwined. The audience that experienced comedy and tragedy at the Dionysia were concerned both with what it means to live in a *polis* and with the practical decisions such a life requires.[21] As such they were a good audience. A people that could place themselves on the city's crowning temple could profitably be reminded of an ultimate necessity beyond the human.[22] And a city that could execute Pericles' only son and namesake as one of the generals killed after Arginusae could benefit from the reminder that the necessity it enforced was its own invention. There was plenty of room for both comedy and tragedy at the City Dionysia.

As Michael Silk has pointed out, there are many kinds of comedy. It is also the case that many of them appear within the drama of Aristophanes. Much

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McLeish, 1980, 67: "everything that happens, possible and impossible alike, is treated with exactly the same gravity by every character in the action."

20 Winnington-Ingram in Anderson, 50 on the "tension between freedom and necessity which seems essential to the tragic paradox"; Schwartz in Burian, 183–209 for tragedy containing both freedom and necessity in relation to the *polis*; Connor, 1989; de Romilly, 1983 for freedom and the theater as a function of democracy. As Hannah Arendt saw it (*The Human Condition*, part 3, ch. 16, 1958): "Man cannot be free if he does not know that he is subject to necessity, because his freedom is always won in his never wholly successful attempts to liberate himself from necessity."

21 Samons, 2004, 30–31; for women questioning their husbands about the Assembly, *Lys.* 508 ff., *Assemblywomen* 552 ff.

22 For the Athenians' unprecedented depiction of themselves on the Parthenon frieze, Pollitt, 2001, 85–89; for a possible response in tragedy, Knox, 1998. Samons, 2004, 55 quotes Lewis, 1992, 139: "To say that the Athenians built the Parthenon to worship themselves would be an exaggeration, but not a great one."

of Aristophanes' humor, the part we tend to find inaccessible or even dull, is pointed at specific people or aspects of Athenian life. But there is also an element that is more general, not least of which is Aristophanes' keen sense of human self-contradiction. It is this aspect of Aristophanes that seems, to me at any rate, to point to something like a view of human nature as such. Nor is Aristophanes, or comedy, the only source for this idea. From Plato's image of human beings as part man, part lion, and part monster (*Rep.* 9.588a–e) to Kant's location of the human in both the noumenal and the phenomenal realms (that is, in the realms of both freedom and necessity), there has often been felt to be something inherently contradictory in being human. It is this sense that comedy appeals to. It is also for this reason that comedy does, while tragedy does not, remind us of its opposite genre, since it is comedy that points to the contradictory elements, both tragic and comic, that make up human life. It is the part of tragedy to confront, in all its deepest intensity and complexity, the dark night of the soul. It is the part of comedy to point out that, even when transformed by an understanding of the meaninglessness of existence, you get up the next morning, brush your teeth, and get on with the job.

Human self-contradiction is Aristophanes' bread and butter. In his comedies identity is a fiction we impose on a self that is constantly in flux. We revere and chafe at the necessity of the city, ignoring the fact that it is a necessity we make up ourselves. We manipulate oracles for the self-contradictory reason that we believe in them. We want to conquer the gods exactly because it is by definition impossible. And we strive, a desire implicitly fulfilled in tragedy, to access a view of the universe that is beyond human ken.

There is a liberation in being made to see these kinds of human absurdity, and an important truth. It is not, however, the only truth about the human condition, and it is here that comedy must be joined by tragedy. The pairing of comedy and tragedy in Athens created a situation in which neither the emotional intensity of tragedy nor the metatheatrical mockery of comedy had an exclusive hold on reality. The juxtaposition forced its audience to consider both visions as true, despite the fact that they were diametrically opposed. It also suggested, and suggests, the possibility that it might be precisely in the fact that they are contradictory that tragedy and comedy most truly represent human life.

There seems to lie behind the Athenian dramatic festivals some sense of what Keats called "negative capability," the ability to resist coming to a conclusion.[23] The audience is not asked to choose between contradictory claims.

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23 Keats, Letter to his brothers, Dec. 21, 1817 and see Hall, 2010, 263.

Rather, as in Heraclitus' bow, created in the tension of opposite pulls on the string, tragedy and comedy gain their meaning from the tension between them.

That Aristophanes had a particular interest in tragedy is clear. This cannot explain, however, why he, like his fellow comedians, continuously set tragedy in the background, even when his theme, Cleon and demagoguery, the war, men and women, or the jury system, had nothing to do with tragedy itself. That he did so, and successfully, argues that the relation of comedy and tragedy went deeper in Athens than simply Aristophanes' particular tastes. It argues that Aristophanes saw comedy as defined by its opposition to tragedy, and that his audience agreed. And if this is true, it may also be that the intense experience of tragedy, an experience that does not explicitly situate itself against other forms of drama, is, as it were, a "one" that gives rise to and is also defined by a "many." As loath as a tragedian might be to admit it, it may be that tragedy was able to express its unique and deeply influential vision of the world at least in part because of the padded, phallic, and self-contradictory creatures with which it shared a stage.

Synopses

Chapter 2: Satyr Drama and the *Cyclops*

Aeschylus, Net-Draggers (*Greek Title:* Dictyulci)

This satyr play accompanied Aeschylus' trilogy about Perseus, which contained the *Polydectes* (named for the King of Seriphos who recovered Danae and Perseus after they had been cast out to sea in a chest by Danae's father) and the *Daughters of Phorcys* (the old women with one eye between them who tell Perseus how to find Medusa). The trilogy must have included Polydectes' sending Perseus on the impossible mission for Medusa's head, leaving Polydectes free to marry Danae against her will. The fragments of *Net-draggers* open with two characters, probably Dictys, a fisherman and brother of Polydectes, and Silenus, the father of the satyrs, catching sight of the chest at sea, and calling all neighboring men, farmers and ditchers, herdsmen, shepherds, and sea-folk, to help haul it out. The entry of the chorus of satyrs probably followed.

In the next fragment Silenus proposes to act as Danae's protector and supporter, claiming that the infant Perseus is delighted with the idea. Somewhat less than delighted herself, Danae appeals to Zeus to save her from such a suitor, whereupon the chorus remark on how the child chortles over their shining bald heads and note what a little prick-lover he is. In the final fragment Silenus addresses the infant Perseus, promising to teach him all a satyr's tricks when he is the child's daddy. The chorus then comments on Danae's infatuation with their youthful vigor, and no wonder, having spent so long all alone in a trunk.

Aeschylus, Festival-Goers (Theori *or* Isthmiastae)

The fragment of this satyr play begins with the satyr chorus thanking someone for likenesses of themselves, perhaps replicas of their own satyr masks, which they proceed to nail up on the temple of Poseidon, commenting that they would frighten off even their own mother. Another character now enters, probably Dionysus, who, reproaching the satyrs for deserting his dances and instead training for the Isthmian Games, makes an uncomplimentary remark on changes made to their phallic members. After a gap in the papyrus, in which the satyrs apparently complain of hard conditions under Dionysus, Dionysus declares that the satyrs will regret their abuse of him as womanish, their condemnation of his dancing, and their taking to athletics; the satyrs, however, refuse to leave the temple where, presumably, they have taken refuge. A new character now enters, perhaps Daedalus or Hephaestus, who offers the satyrs "new playthings," perhaps javelins to use in the games, which they reject with

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fear. The new character then promises to be a good companion in the games if the satyrs allow him to sail with them, apparently implying some form of escape.

Sophocles, Trackers (Ichneutae)

The story is that of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, in which the newborn Hermes steals his brother Apollo's cattle, covering his tracks by driving them backward. When finally discovered he is brought before Zeus, and ends by giving Apollo the lyre he has just invented, made from the shell of a tortoise, as amends. Sophocles' satyr play opens with Apollo offering a reward for the recovery of his lost cattle. At the word "profit" (*misthos*) Silenus appears, and Apollo promises freedom for him and his sons (the satyrs) if the cattle are found. The satyr chorus enters, divides into three groups who, to Silenus' outrage (124–130), cavort about, partially on their stomachs, tracking the backwards prints of the cattle. When the satyrs are suddenly terrified by a strange sound Silenus abuses them for their cowardice, boldly taking their place, and then, when he hears the sound himself, running away in terror. At this point the nymph Cyllene emerges from her cave to confront the satyrs, explaining that, since Maia, his mother, is sick, she is nursing the infant Hermes, Zeus' son. The sound the satyrs heard was the lyre, from a mysterious animal called a tortoise, who in life was mute but who now, in death, has a voice. Despite their mystification, the satyrs conclude that the child must have stolen Apollo's cattle, an accusation Cyllene angrily rejects, at which point the fragment ends.

Euripides, Cyclops

The story is taken from Book Nine of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus, imprisoned in the cave of the Cyclops, Polyphemus, blinds him, ties his men under the bellies of the Cyclops' sheep, and then escapes when Polyphemus rolls back the immense boulder blocking the cave entrance. In Euripides' version Silenus and the satyrs, who have been taken prisoner by the Cyclops, welcome Odysseus who arrives while the Cyclops is out hunting. Silenus eagerly trades the Cyclops' goods for Odysseus' wine, until the Cyclops returns and Silenus accuses Odysseus of theft. The Cyclops debates the merits of the Trojan War with Odysseus, and then takes the Greeks into his cave to make a meal of them.

After a choral interlude Odysseus emerges from the cave and describes the Cyclops' feasting on his men. He is shaken but he has a plan: to make the Cyclops drunk then blind him. The delighted satyrs promise to help, particularly after the drunken Cyclops emerges, casts his lustful eye on their father, Silenus, and brings him back into the cave with him. Unfortunately, as the task approaches the satyrs discover they have mysteriously sprained their collective

ankles while standing still, and can only sing encouragement from the sidelines. Blinded, the Cyclops emerges looking for "Noman," Odysseus' alias, and is led through a "Who's on first" routine by the satyrs. Odysseus then emerges with his men, boasts of his revenge, and exits. The Cyclops leaves to find a rock to hurl at Odysseus' ship, as in the *Odyssey*, and the satyrs take the opportunity to sail off with Odysseus and back to their master Dionysus.

Chapter 3: The *Oresteia, Bacchae* and *Acharnians*

Aristophanes, Acharnians

The play opens with our hero, Dikaiopolis or "Just-city" (who will be named in the Euripides scene) sitting in the Assembly, waiting for the Assembly leaders (*prytaneis*) to arrive, and complaining that only he, a countryman shut up in the city because of the war, cares about peace. Sure enough, when the officers finally arrive they refuse to listen to an offer from Amphitheos ("God-on-both-sides") to negotiate peace, and, despite Dikaiopolis' protests, admit instead a bogus embassy from Persia and fee-grubbing officials back from an embassy in Thrace. The pseudo-Odomantian warriors brought from Thrace proceed to steal Dikaiopolis' lunch whereupon he, in disgust, declares the Assembly closed on account of rain. Meanwhile, however, he has sent Amphitheos off to negotiate a peace just for himself and his family, and now, at his return, he purchases a thirty-year peace (since *sponde* means either a "peace treaty" or a "libation," this is also thirty-year-old wine) and prepares to enjoy it.

The chorus, old war-hardened farmers from Acharnia, a country deme once famous for its charcoal, but now despoiled by the war, enter in fury at the idea of anyone making peace with the Spartans. They find Dikaiopolis celebrating the Rural Dionysia (and so outside the city walls) alone with his family. When the Acharnians refuse to listen to reason Dikaiopolis takes as hostage (in a parody of Euripides' *Telephus*) a coal basket, forcing the chorus to agree to hear his speech. Dikaiopolis, suddenly speaking as Aristophanes under threat from Cleon, decides he needs to visit Euripides to acquire a ragged disguise. Having outfitted himself as Euripides' beggar-king, Telephus, Dikaiopolis argues that the Spartans did only what the Athenians themselves would have done under the circumstances. Half the chorus is convinced; the other half calls the general Lamachus (who seems to have been chosen largely for his name, Mr. "Very-warlike") to their aid. Dikaiopolis bests Lamachus and wins over the rest of the chorus by revealing that he is no beggar but rather a true citizen. He then leaves to set up a market at which all will be welcome except for Lamachus, and the chorus delivers the *parabasis* on the benefits of comic poetry to the city.

The second half of the play consists primarily of the visitors to Dikaiopolis' new market. The first, a Megarian, starved by the Athenians' refusal to allow Megara to trade in Athenian ports, disguises his daughters as two "piggies" (an obscene pun on *choiros*, both "pig" and "cunt") and trades them for salt and garlic. The second, a prosperous Boeotian (an enemy of Athens), brings luxury goods and trades them for a uniquely Athenian product, an informer. An old farmer named Dercetes, who has lost his oxen in a Boeotian raid, begs for a drop of peace to aid his failing eyesight but is refused, while a bridesmaid, who begs some peace so that the groom can keep his prick at home, is given it. Dikaiopolis prepares a feast that he does not plan to share while the chorus comment rather hungrily. As the Festival of the Pitchers has been declared, Dikaiopolis is called away to the celebration and Lamachus to active duty; in an elaborate double scene, each prepares. After a brief second *parabasis* condemning the producer Antimachus ("Mr. Anti-war") who failed to feast his chorus, Lamachus and Dikaiopolis return. Lamachus, who has been wounded by a vine prop, is supported by fellow soldiers, while Dikaiopolis, who has won the festival contest by being the first to drain his wine-bowl, is supported by dancing girls. The play ends with Lamachus borne away to the public doctor and Dikaiopolis led offstage in a victory procession.

Chapter 4: The *Ajax, Medea* and *Wasps*

Aristophanes, Wasps

The play opens with two slaves talking about their dreams. Finally one remarks: "Come now, it's time to tell the audience the story" (54) and proceeds to explain the plot. Their master, Bdelycleon ("Cleon-hater") has a father Philocleon ("Cleon-lover") who is addicted to jury service (a paid and voluntary occupation in Athens). Having tried everything to break him of this addiction, Bdelycleon now has his father imprisoned inside the house and is busily combating, along with his slaves, his attempts to escape. A group of old men then arrive, led by their sons and lamenting their poverty. These are the chorus, made up of Philocleon's fellow jurors in the character of Attic wasps, here to collect Philocleon for the day's work. Bdelycleon fends off their attempts to free his father and offers to argue that jury service is a form of slavery, not a position of power. Having agreed to the contest, Philocleon expatiates on the joy of having powerful defendants kowtow to him, and Bdelycleon then demonstrates that in fact the wealth of the Athenian empire goes not to the jurors, but to the demagogues who manipulate them. The chorus is convinced, but not Philocleon, who is appeased only by his son's offer to set up a private law court

at home for him to judge. A case is soon found, as one of the house watchdogs has just accused another of stealing (without sharing) a Sicilian cheese. The case, a parody of Cleon's (here Cuon, or "Dog") accusations that his political opponent, Laches (here Labes or "Snatcher"), embezzled funds in Sicily, is duly conducted, with a dog as prosecutor and a cheese grater as the primary witness. It concludes when Bdelycleon leads his father to the wrong voting urn and so tricks him into acquitting the defendant. In despair at actually having acquitted someone, Philocleon abandons the law courts and agrees to live the pleasant life his son promises him.

After the *parabasis*, which explains the grave mistake that the audience made the previous year, when they did not give Aristophanes' *Clouds* its rightful victory, Bdelycleon reappears, attempting to teach his father the new sophisticated ways enjoyed by men of leisure. The one point Philocleon appears to absorb is that telling a witty story can get one out of trouble, and with this information he heads off with his son to a drinking party. The results are narrated by Xanthias, one of the opening pair of slaves, who describes how Philocleon stuffed himself, became completely drunk, insulted everyone in the company, and took off with the dancing girl. Philocleon then appears with the dancing girl in tow, promising to set her up after his grouchy old son dies, followed by his outraged son and a long line of victims of abuse, all threatening to take Philocleon to court. He responds by telling irrelevant stories. Bdelycleon manages to get his father back into the house just long enough for Xanthias to emerge and describe the uproar that the old man is creating inside by doing old tragic dances. In a welter of tragic parody Philocleon then bursts onto the scene to challenge all comers to a contest in tragic dance. The tragic dancers Carcinus and his three sons apparently respond and Philocleon ends the play by, as he says, doing something never done before, leading offstage a dancing chorus of trugodians (1535–1537).

Chapter 5: *Oedipus Tyrannos* and the *Knights*

Aristophanes, Knights

The play opens with a pair of slaves, who may represent the generals Nicias and Demosthenes, rushing out of the stage building and complaining that ever since their master purchased Paphlagon, a new slave, they have had nothing but beatings. After some jokes on the possibility of running away they decide to explain the situation to the audience: their master is Mr. Demos [Mr. People] of Pnyx [the hill upon which the Athenian *demos* held its assembly], who has just purchased a new slave, a tanner [like Cleon], who has by toadying, swindling,

and intimidation come to control the entire household [city], forcing the other slaves [politicians] to knuckle under. At the end of their rope, Slave A decides that the only possible solution is for Slave B to steal some wine for him so that he can deal with the problem drunk. Slave B does so and Slave A, after having indulged, has Slave B steal Paphlagon's oracles as well, which prove their salvation. It seems that the oracle that Paphlagon has been jealously guarding proclaims that just as a hemp seller gave way to a sheep seller [as leader of the Athenian Assembly] and a sheep seller to the hide seller, Paphlagon, so must the hide seller give way to the very lowest of the low, a sausage seller. As if by providence a sausage seller immediately appears. While Slave A persuades the sausage seller that he is the man intended by destiny, Slave B goes back into the house to reappear as Paphlagon [there being only three actors available], threatening the sausage seller, and pursued in his turn by the chorus of Knights, aristocratic opponents of Cleon, and so (paradoxically) supporters of the sausage seller. After a vigorous attack by the chorus, Paphlagon and the sausage seller settle down to a prolonged slanging match, in which each (in vivid detail) threatens the person of the other and boasts about his ability to defraud the city. Finally Paphlagon and the sausage seller rush off to the Council to accuse each other, and the chorus steps in to deliver a *parabasis* on Aristophanes' theatrical modesty and the genuine devotion of the Knights to the city, despite their aristocratic ways.

After the *parabasis* the sausage seller returns and delivers his own messenger speech, describing his triumph in persuading the Council to prefer his wasteful, short-sighted, and self-indulgent proposals to Paphlagon's. Paphlagon then returns to the charge and another slanging match ensues, culminating in the all-important question of who is best able to make a fool out of Demos [the people]. To settle the question Demos himself appears, ready to choose between Paphlagon and the sausage seller, who now present themselves as lovers competing for his attention. The competition is held on the Pnyx, the location of the Athenian Assembly, at Demos' insistence and despite the sausage seller's despair that the old man, shrewd enough anywhere else, becomes a driveling idiot as soon as he sits on that rock. Amid the slanging the sausage seller gives Demos a cushion to protect what sat to the oars at Salamis, setting off a comparison between Paphlagon and Themistocles, not to the advantage of the former. The sausage seller then matches Paphlagon's boasts by giving Demos shoes and a tunic while all Paphlagon can manage is his smelly leather jacket.

The final stage of the competition occurs when Demos demands his ring back from Paphlagon. Paphlagon counters with his oracles, a chest full of them, countered in turn by the sausage seller's attic-and-two-apartment-buildings-

full. The competition in oracle topping leads to a competition in interpreting the oracles, then to a contest in divinely inspired dreams and divine favors prepared for Demos and delivered by his two lovers. As the two run off to fetch baskets full of their last presents Demos suddenly tells the chorus that he has known all along what his slaves were up to and is just using them. The contest is finally resolved by looking into the baskets: the sausage seller's is empty, since he has given all to Demos, but Paphlagon's is stuffed with goodies for himself. Paphlagon, in despair, rests his last hopes in his fateful oracle, but this turns out to predict the sausage seller's triumph. Paphlagon, in a welter of tragic parody, is rolled off stage and Demos leaves with the sausage seller, his new steward, whose name is revealed to be "Agoracritus" or "Chosen by the Assembly." Then, after an unexpected second *parabasis*, the sausage seller leads Demos onto stage boiled down and rejuvenated, now inhabiting the Athens of old, and determined to return to better ways. The sausage seller is invited to public honor at the Prytaneum, while Paphlagon will take up sausage-selling and employ his skills in quarreling with whores at the city gates.

Chapter 6: *Persians*, *Peace*, and *Birds*

Aristophanes, Peace

The *Peace* begins with our usual pair of slaves kneading dung-cakes and discussing their master, Trugaios's, strange insanity. Their master, it seems, infuriated with Zeus for condemning Greece to endless war, has decided to fly to Olympus on a dung-beetle (hence the cakes) to demand an explanation. Despite his daughter's pointing out that he would seem "more tragic" to the gods if he flew on Pegasus (136), Trugaios insists and takes off on the *mechane* or crane, cautioning the crane-operator to be careful lest he feed the beetle. Having arrived on Olympus, Trugaios encounters Hermes who calls him "scum" (183) and tells him that Zeus and the gods have abandoned the place in disgust at the Greeks' refusal to make peace. War is now in residence, has buried Peace in a deep pit, and plans to make a salad (we would say "mincemeat") out of the Greek city-states. Hermes leaves and Trugaios watches War add Prasiae (leeks), Megara (garlic), Sicily (cheese) and Attica (honey) to his bowl, and then send his assistant "Tumult" off for a pestle to grind them up. But as Athens and Sparta have lost their pestles (the war-promoting generals, Cleon in Athens and Brasidas in Sparta, both having been killed at Amphipolis) War puts off the salad-making to another day, leaving Trugaios to call upon the chorus of "all you Greeks" to come pull Peace out of her hiding place while War is off in his cave.

The chorus manages to make it to Olympus but, as Trugaios urgently warns them to be quiet, cannot restrain their dancing. Finally, however, their legs are calmed, Hermes, who has reemerged and threatened to alert Zeus, is brought over to their side (by means of a hefty bribe), and they begin to haul out Peace, only to discover that not all the city-states are pulling together. The problem is solved by giving the job to the farmers, who finally drag out both Peace (a statue) and her companions, the female abstractions Opopa, "Harvest" and Theoria, "Festival-going." Hermes then explains how the Greeks, beginning with Pheidias and Pericles, had chased Peace away, and serves as interpreter for the statue's inquiries about Athens. Hermes tells Trugaios to bring Peace down to Greece, marry Harvest himself, and present Festival-going to the Athenian Council, but as Trugaios prepares to remount his beetle he discovers that Zeus has taken his steed (as he did Pegasus) for his own stable, and the hero has to make the trip back from Olympus on foot.

After a short *parabasis* that celebrates Aristophanes' courage in attacking Cleon and skewers the playwright's comic and tragic competitors, Trugaios returns to Athens, a bit lame from his trip. He briefly describes the dithyrambic poets he met wandering in the upper reaches and proceeds (literally) to bring Festival-going to the Council, who are seated in the first rows of the audience. He then prepares a sacrifice with which to install Peace as a goddess, throws barley to the spectators, sprinkles the chorus with water—and decides the lamb would be better slaughtered offstage. The audience is invited to attend and, despite the intrusion of Hierocles, an oracle-monger, and after a second *parabasis*, the sacrifice turns into a wedding feast. A grateful sickle maker and potter arrive for the wedding, followed by some arms makers desperately trying to unload their now useless wares. After some unwelcome suggestions from Trugaios they leave and two boys who are to sing at the wedding come out. The first, who proves to be Lamachus' son, sings of war and is chased off, while the second, the son of Cleonymus, notorious for throwing away his shield in battle, sings Archilochus' song of abandoning his shield. Trugaios urges the chorus to join the feast, which they well may do, and the hero's wedding to Harvest and the return of peace is celebrated by all.

Aristophanes, Birds

Peisetairos ("Comrade-persuader") and Euelpides ("Good-hope") come on stage holding birds that they hope will help them find Tereus, the hoopoe who was once a human being, who might tell them of some quiet spot far from Athens. They finally gain access to Tereus through his bird-servant, but the far off places he suggests are not quite right. Suddenly Peisetairos has a brainstorm: as the word for sky, *polos*, is much the same as the word for city, *polis*, all

they need do is build a city wall around the heavens, establish a bird-city, and starve out the gods. After a battle with the bird-chorus, who are suspicious of humans and their bird-eating ways, Peisetairos persuades them, with mythological evidence, that before even Earth came to be the birds ruled everything. Charmed by the idea of their lost sovereignty, the birds agree to help Peisetairos in whatever way they can, and proceed to a *parabasis* in which they explain the primacy of the birds, their freedom from human convention, and the advantage of being able to fly away during the tragic plays and come back for the comedy.

After the *parabasis* Peisetairos and Euelpides return, now sporting wings thanks to the action of a magical root. Peisetairos comes up with "Cloudcuckooton" as the name for their new city, and Euelpides is dismissed to help build the walls, never to return. Peisetairos attempts a sacrifice at the altar on stage to celebrate the founding of the city but is interrupted by a poet, who claims to have "long since" celebrated the city, a cadging oracle-monger, the Athenian city-planner, Meton, an Inspector sent from Athens to examine affairs in the subject states, and a decree seller who attempts to bring Cloudcuckooton under Athenian sway. Peisetairos then decides to sacrifice the goat inside and so avoid the problem of killing the animal on stage. Meanwhile the chorus delivers their second *parabasis*, describing their divinity, their proclamations, the idyllic life of the birds, and the reasons the judges should vote for them.

The second *parabasis* is followed by an account of the miraculous rise of the city walls and the arrival of Iris who is threatened with death (despite her being immortal) for refusing to recognize the sovereignty of the birds. The new city then prepares for floods of eager immigrants, who appear in the persons of, first, a young man seeking to beat up his father, second, Cinesias, an Athenian dithyrambic poet, and third an informer, all of whom are properly dispatched. The gods then arrive, alternating with lyrics about that strange foreign land, Athens. Prometheus, who is hiding from Zeus under an umbrella, appears first and discloses the dire situation on Olympus. A divine embassy follows, made up of Poseidon, Heracles, and a representative from the barbarian gods. As instructed by Prometheus Peisetairos bargains for the possession of Basileia, or "Princess" and succeeds when he points out to Heracles that (under Athenian law) he is a bastard, and so cannot inherit Zeus' property.[1] Having gained Princess and Zeus' thunderbolt, Peisetairos, now "most exalted of all the gods" (1765) celebrates his wedding and the play comes to a close.

1 "Princess" is Sommerstein's translation, distinguishing "Basileia" (with a short final alpha) from "Sovereignty," with a long final alpha. For Aristophanes' invention of this new goddess see Sommerstein, *Birds*, 298; Dunbar, *Birds*, 480; A.M. Bowie, 1993, 164; Newinger, 1957, 92–102.

Chapter 7. *Women at the Thesmophoria* and *Frogs*

Aristophanes, Women at the Thesmophoria (Thesmophoriazusae)

The play opens with Euripides and an unnamed in-law on a quest, which turns out to be for the young and effeminate tragic poet, Agathon. Agathon emerges, dressed in women's clothes, and explaining that to write a woman's part he must adopt woman's ways. The in-law suggests other, obscene, ways in which he might act like a woman, but Euripides soon gets down to business, explaining that the women of Athens are about to hold the Thesmophoria, their yearly all-female festival for Demeter and Persephone, and at it they plan to contrive a way to destroy Euripides in retaliation for his negative portrayal of women. When Agathon refuses to infiltrate the festival on Euripides' behalf the in-law volunteers, is promptly shaved and dressed as a woman, and sent to the festival, having elicited from Euripides an oath (which he ensures is sworn to the real gods) to help if the in-law gets into trouble.

The women convene the Thesmophoria in the mode of a mock political Assembly and Euripides' iniquity is discussed. The in-law's attempt to defend Euripides on the grounds that women are actually even worse than he says is not successful. A notoriously effeminate Athenian, Cleisthenes, arrives to warn the women that there is a spy in their midst, and after a good deal of comic searching for his phallus, the in-law is found out. In a last ditch attempt to save himself he takes on the role of Euripides' tragic hero, Telephus and snatches a baby as hostage, only to discover that the baby is actually a wineskin. Now a prisoner of the chorus, the in-law seeks escape by taking on the roles of Euripidean victims. Beginning with the *Palamedes* he tries inscribing messages on votive tablets, as Palamedes' brother had inscribed them on oars. This fails, and the chorus holds the *parabasis* in which they explain that women are, if anything, better suited to run the state than the men, who are (as they were in fact) making a mess of it.

After the *parabasis* the in-law attempts a number of even more elaborate parodies. Since he is already dressed as a woman, he decides to play Helen stranded in Egypt (from Euripides' *Helen* of the year before) and is rewarded by the appearance of Euripides as Menelaus. Unfortunately, the woman who has been left to guard the prisoner, Critylla, does not play her part as the Priestess who befriends the couple, and the plot fails. The situation becomes even more dire as a *prytanis*, an Athenian official, enters and decides to have the in-law bound to a plank and guarded by one of the Scythian archers who made up the Athenian police. This time, at Euripides' signal, the in-law plays the role of Andromeda who was also bound to a post, and after Echo, from the same play, has made a brief appearance, Euripides flies in as Perseus. Unfortunately,

the Scythian archer also proves unwilling to enter into the drama, so Euripides must depart to reemerge as an old crone accompanied by Fawn, a dancing-girl, and Wormwood, a boy piper. Having quickly settled with the chorus by promising that, if they will release his in-law, he will not denigrate women any longer, Euripides is left the job of dealing with the Scythian, which he manages by having the dancing-girl lure him offstage. Euripides and the in-law escape; the satisfied Scythian returns to find his prisoner gone; the chorus misdirects him; he runs offstage; they go home to their families, and the play is over.

Aristophanes, Frogs

The *Frogs* opens with Dionysus, the god of wine and theater, accompanied by his slave, Xanthias, who asks which jokes he should tell the audience. Dionysus is dressed in his usual saffron robe and soft boots (*kothornoi*), over which he wears Heracles' lion-skin. He is on his way to his brother Heracles, since he wants to bring back Euripides, who has recently died, and needs directions to Hades. After arguing with Dionysus about Euripides' merits, Heracles suggests suicide as a quick way to the underworld. When this idea is rejected he explains the route, based on his own experiences in the underworld with the watchdog, Cerberus, and the heroes Peirithous and Theseus. A corpse which is making the same trip refuses to carry Dionysus' luggage at the suggested wage, so Dionysus takes Charon's barge while Xanthias walks (since Charon does not convey slaves who did not fight in the great naval battle of Arginusae), and carries the luggage. On the way Dionysus, who has been made to row, encounters the chorus of Frogs and learns to sing in time. Reunited with Xanthias, the two venture into the underworld facing innumerable terrors, most of which are invented by Xanthias, and encountering a surprise second chorus made up of (presumably dead) initiates to the Eleusinian Mysteries. Dionysus proves his cowardice by exchanging costumes with Xanthias whenever his presence as "Heracles" is challenged. After a number of such exchanges Pluto's slave, Aeacus, proposes to distinguish divine master from mortal slave by beating them, under the (as it turns out, false) premise that gods are impervious to pain. When the test fails Aeacus decides to let Pluto and Persephone decide, as one god, presumably, is able to identify another one.

After the *parabasis*, in which the chorus recommends that the citizens disenfranchised after the oligarchic revolution of 411 be reinstated, Xanthias emerges with a fellow slave from among the dead discussing various ways of annoying one's master. The plot of the second half of the play is then revealed: a contest between Aeschylus and Euripides for the Chair of Tragedy, Sophocles (who had also recently died) having resigned in favor of Aeschylus. Dionysus, now back in his proper identity, is to be judge. The contest proceeds through

three stages, a discussion of which poet is more beneficial to the city, a comparison of prologues and lyrics, and a literal weighing of lines. When Dionysus declares that he cannot decide, Pluto makes the surprise announcement that he can take whichever poet he chooses back to earth with him. Dionysus then declares that his intention all along was to find a poet to save the city and, after questioning the poets on how they would accomplish this, chooses Aeschylus. Euripides collapses; Sophocles is awarded the Chair, and Aeschylus and Dionysus, after being feasted by Pluto, are conducted with a torchlight procession back to Athens and the theater where the audience is sitting.

Also

Aristophanes, Clouds

The play opens with our hero, soon to be named Strepsiades ("Twister"), worried about his debts and unable to sleep. His son, Pheidippides, whose passion for horses has caused the debt, sleeps soundly beside him. But Strepsiades has a plan. Next door is the Thinkery, where clever souls like Socrates teach a Better and a Worse Logos ("Argument"). If Pheidippides would learn the Worse Logos, which can plead an unjust cause and prevail, Strepsiades would be free of his obligations. But Pheidippides, disgusted by Socrates' pale and unathletic students, refuses, so Strepsiades is forced to attend the school himself.

Strepsiades goes over to the school where a student tries, unsuccessfully, to explain the studies. He then meets Socrates who floats in standing on a cheese-rack and studying "celestial phenomena" (Sommerstein, *Clouds*, 228). Strepsiades is initiated and agrees to worship the school's gods, who promptly appear, with a solemn entry song, as Clouds. Strepsiades, amazed to discover that there is no Zeus, only a celestial vortex, promptly takes "Vortex" for a god, wonders at the human form of the Clouds, and swears allegiance. As he settles down to his studies the Clouds perform the *parabasis* (written for the second version of the play) in which Aristophanes reproaches the audience for not appreciating the intellectual quality of the first version (which had won third place out of three). The Clouds then explain how beneficial they are to Athens and the play returns to Strepsiades, who proves utterly incapable of abstract thought, except that he likes the notion that a female fowl should be a "fowless" and that a kneading trough, by Greek rules of gender, should be not a *cardopos* but a *cardopé*.[2] Otherwise incapable of mastering his lessons, he turns

2 Sommersein, *Clouds*, coins "fowless" along with "fowler" and "*cardopé*" for Socrates's grammatical terms.

to the Clouds for advice, who suggest that he send his son to school instead. Pheidippides reluctantly agrees, and to showcase the school's offerings Better and Worse Logos stage a debate, which Worse wins by pointing out that the entire audience is really on his side. Better Logos goes over to the other side, Pheidippides enters the school, and there are dire hints from the chorus that things may not turn out as the characters expect.

After a truncated second *parabasis*, Strepsiades enters, counting on his son to get him out of his debts, which come due on the last day of the month, also called (after the moon) "Old-and-new day." Pheidippides, now an accomplished sophist, is produced and proves that as no day can be both old and new, Strepsiades' creditors cannot collect. Made confident by such skill, Strepsiades abuses the creditors who come to call, but soon rushes from the house, assaulted by his son. He explains that he had objected to Pheidippides' reciting some particularly *outré* passages from Euripides, after which, in a second formal *agon*, Pheidippides proves that it is perfectly right to beat one's father and suggests that the rule would also hold for one's mother. Outraged, Strepsiades blames the Clouds, who explain that it is his own fault for desiring evil, and that they do this so that men may learn to fear the gods. Accepting the judgment as fair, Strepsiades appeals to his son to help him take vengeance on Socrates, but Pheidippides refuses to do such an injustice to his teachers. Left on his own Strepsiades has a little conversation with the statue of Hermes in front of his house, and burns down the Thinkery, climbing on the roof and like Socrates earlier, 'treading on air and looking down on the sun' (225, 1503).

Glossary

Acharnians hardened country people from a deme near Athens who suffered particularly from Spartan invasions of Attica during the Peloponnesian War. Also the chorus of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*.

Agathon Greek tragic poet, younger contemporary of Euripides, ridiculed by Aristophanes as effeminate.

Agon Greek for "contest"; a section of drama, either comedy or tragedy, containing a debate, often in a generically conventional format.

Agora the Athenian marketplace and general gathering area, just northwest of the Acropolis, where the *Prytaneis*, Council officers, were lodged and where Socrates held his conversations.

Attica the territory controlled by the city of Athens, divided into various small towns and communities (demes).

Atossa Queen of Persia, widow of Darius, mother of Xerxes; the central (though unnamed) character in Aeschylus' *Persians*.

Aulos A double-pipe that was played to accompany the lyrics of a Greek drama. Scenes on Greek vases are often marked as dramatic by the presence of an aulos player.

Boeotia Greek territory northwest of Attica, largely controlled by Thebes and allied to Sparta, traditionally hostile to Athens. Known for luxury agricultural products, including eels.

Charon ferryman of the Underworld, who carries souls across the river Styx, traditionally at the cost of an obol.

Choregos The "producer" of a Greek drama, a significant expense, undertaken as a form of tax or public service ("liturgy") by a wealthy citizen.

Chorephaios The leader of the Chorus in a Greek drama.

Chorus In a tragedy composed of twelve or fifteen members, and in a comedy of twenty-four, usually in matching costume. In satyr-drama the satyrs make up the chorus. Unlike the three actors in a given drama, chorus members had to be Athenian citizens, and were given time off military service for rehearsal. Like the actors, chorus members were always male.

City Dionysia or "Greater Dionysia," held in Athens in March/April and distinguished from the "Rural" or "Lesser" Dionysian festivals held in various towns throughout Attica. The festival included a procession and competitions in dithyramb, tragedy and comedy as well as various public ceremonies such as the allies' public delivery of their annual tribute to Athens.

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Cleisthenes (1) founder of Athenian democracy and of the Athenian ten tribes. (2) Athenian of the fifth century, ridiculed in comedy for his effeminacy.

Cleon a leading politician or demagogue during the early part of the Peloponnesian War, who made his money through tanning and was a prime target of Aristophanes.

Cleonymus a common target of Athenian comedy, known for throwing his shield away during battle.

Cloudcuckooton more usually "Cloudcuckooland," but given this designation, since, in the *Birds*, this traditional utopian space is remade as a Greek *polis*.

Council or "Boule," the group of 500 citizens chosen annually by lot (50 from each tribe) who supervised the general administration of Athens.

Crane or "Mechane" the device in the Theater of Dionysus on the slopes of the Acropolis upon which actors, often portraying gods, could be elevated, hence the Latin term, *deus ex machina*, "the god from the machine."

Cratinus Athenian comic poet, an older contemporary of Aristophanes, often grouped with Aristophanes and Eupolis as comic writers, matching the tragic playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. His particular political target seems to have been Pericles.

Deme a subdivision of Athens and Attica; each tribe, as established by Cleisthenes, was made up of demes from Athens, and from both coastal and inland Attica. An Athenian citizen was identified by his name, his father's name, and his deme.

Demos Greek for "people," as in "democracy." A "Mr. Demos of Pnyx" (the location of the Athenian Assembly) is a central character in Aristophanes' *Knights*.

Dikaiopolis "Just-city," the comic hero of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*.

Dithyramb originally a hymn sung in praise of Dionysus. In the City Dionysia, dithyrambic competitions for both boys and men, each with fifty members of a given tribe competing, preceded the dramatic competitions. Only citizens could compete.

Ekkekluma the device used to "roll out" from within the *skene* scenes understood to be located inside the stage building. Often used for the revelation of murder victims, as in the bringing out of Agamemnon's corpse in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.

Eupolis comic playwright and younger contemporary of Aristophanes, making up, with Cratinus and Aristophanes, the conventional trio of comic poets.

Festival of the Pitchers Greek *Choes*, the second day of the three-day Anthesteria Festival. The primary event, as dramatized in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, was a contest to see who could first empty their wine-bowl. Traditionally, Orestes arrived in Athens on this day, and as he was still under a taint because of the murder of his mother and could not drink with others, the custom was established of drinking alone on this day.

Komos a drunken procession, often following a *symposium*, or drinking party. The name "comedy" indicates a "*komos* song."

Lamachus an Athenian general in the Peloponnesian War, ridiculed by Aristophanes as bombastic and militaristic, largely due to his name, "Very-warlike."

Lenaia the second major dramatic festival in Athens, held in January, and, due to the impassability of the seas, largely confined to Athenian spectators.

Liturgy a public service assigned to and performed by a wealthy citizen as a form of taxation. Among the most important and expensive liturgies were outfitting a warship (trireme) and financing a comedy or tragedy at one of the dramatic competitions.

Logos "Argument" "account" or "story." In the *Clouds* Aristophanes has a "Stronger Logos," associated with morality and tradition, beaten by a "Weaker Logos," identified with moral depravity, disbelief in the gods, and sophistic (here Socratic) thought.

Marathon the great victory of the Athenians and Plataeans over much larger Persian forces in the first Persian War. Despite the chronological near-impossibility, Aristophanes often identifies his chorus with the "great generation" that fought at Marathon (the "Marathonomachoi").

Mechane See Crane.

Megara a *polis* to the southwest of Attica, allied with Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. Associated with the production of garlic and salt, it was impoverished by Pericles' "Megarian Decree," which barred Megara from the use of Athenian ports.

Nomos "convention" or "law," the norms of a given society, in opposition to "*physis*" or nature.

Obol Athenian coin, the sixth part of a drachma, a drachma being a good day's wage. A theoric fund, established in either the fifth or fourth century, paid the two obol admission fee to the City Dionysia for those who could not afford it.

Oikos "household," or "family," seen as largely self-sufficient, and the source of English "economics." *Oikos* and *polis* (city) were often paired in an opposition linked to that of female and male.

Orchestra the area at the front of an Athenian stage-area, primarily intended for the dancing of the chorus, and probably with a low raised stage behind for the actors.

Palamedes in Greek myth the inventor of writing and enemy of Odysseus, who contrived his execution at Troy. Euripides' tragedy, *Palamedes* formed the second of his "Trojan trilogy," which also included the extant *Trojan Women*. It is parodied in Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

Paphlagon a character in Aristophanes' *Knights*, depicting Cleon as a slave from Paphlagonia (the name suggests "bombast") recently purchased by Mr. Demos.

Parabasis a section, often in the middle of a Greek comedy, in which the chorus speaks directly for the playwright, often celebrating his skill and denigrating his rivals. A "second *parabasis*" occasionally appears later in the comedy.

Parodos meaning "entry," one of the two side-entrances to the left and right of the stage by which actors and chorus entered or exited the theater; also the entry-song of the chorus.

Peisetairos "Companion-persuader," the comic hero of Aristophanes' *Birds*.

Phallic Procession a traditional procession, often involving masks and ritual abuse, depicted on early vases and associated with various festivals, including the City Dionysia.

Philocleon "Cleon-lover," father of Bdelycleon, "Cleon-hater," and hero of Aristophanes' *Wasps*.

Platon Athenian comic playwright, contemporary with Aristophanes, known for political plays. Called Platon or "Plato Comicus" to distinguish him from Plato the philosopher.

Pnyx the location, to the west of the Acropolis and Athenian Agora, where the Assembly met. The structure held about six thousand citizens.

Polis (pl. poleis) or city-state, an independent state in Classical Greece, gov-

	erned by the adult male citizens meeting in an Assembly. During the Peloponnesian War Athens encouraged their allied *poleis* towards democracy, in which there was no property qualification for citizenship, while Sparta encouraged its allies toward oligarchy. In Aristophanes' *Birds* the hero, Peisetairos, uses the similarity of the Greek words *polis* and *polos*, "sky," to found a city of the birds.
Prosatyric	a drama without a chorus of satyrs used to replace the traditional satyr play as the fourth play after a tragic trilogy. Euripides' *Alcestis* is the only certain example.
Prytanis (pl. prytaneis)	an executive officer of the Athenian Council and Assembly. Each fifty-person group in the Council (the Council members from a given tribe, selected by lot) served as Prytaneis for a tenth of the year and decided what legislation to bring before the Assembly.
Prytaneum	dining-place of the Prytaneis in Athens, where foreign ambassadors and dignitaries, as well as citizens deserving of special honor, were entertained.
Rural Dionysia	or "Lesser Dionysia," as distinct from the festival in Athens, the "City" or "Greater" Dionysia. Festivals held in the various demes of Attica in honor of Dionysus, some of which included theatrical performances. Dikaiopolis celebrates his escape from the city walls in *Acharnians* by celebrating the Rural Dionysia.
Salamis	site of the great sea battle in the second Peloponnesian War in which the Greeks, led by Athens, defeated an overwhelmingly superior Persian naval force.
Satyr	wild creatures, half-human, half-horse (or later, half-human, half-goat), traditionally followers of Dionysus, and the chorus in satyr drama.
Satyr drama	a comic play that followed the three tragedies (tragic trilogy) that tragic playwrights competed with in the fifth-century City Dionysia.
Sausage seller	extremely low status position in Athens; hero of Aristophanes' *Knights*.
Silenus	or "Papposilenus," the "father" of the satyrs and leader of the chorus in satyr drama. "Silen" is an alternative name for "satyr."
Skene	the stage-building that formed the background for Greek drama, usually with one central door, often depicting a pal-

ace, in tragedy, and with two doors depicting ordinary houses in comedy. A late source says that in satyr drama the *skene* often depicted a cave.

Sponde either a peace treaty or wine, from a libation of wine being poured to solemnize a treaty.

Strepsiades "Twister," hero of Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

Symposium drinking party, a traditional male aristocratic entertainment, often followed by a *komos*.

Telephus in Greek myth, a son of Heracles and King of the Mysians, wounded by Achilles when the Greek force attacked Mysia on their way to Troy. Able to be cured only by the spear that wounded him, Telephus makes his way into the Greek camp in disguise, delivers a speech condemning the war and takes Agamemnon's son, Orestes, hostage before his true identity is revealed. Euripides' tragedy, the *Telephus*, which was produced with the *Alcestis* taking the place of a satyr drama, is parodied in both the *Acharnians* and *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

Tereus in Greek myth, a barbarian king who marries an Athenian princess, Procne, then rapes her sister, Philomela, and cuts out her tongue to silence her. Procne kills Tereus' and her son, Itys, in revenge and all three are finally turned into birds. Aristophanes' *Birds* plays off a tragedy by Sophocles, *Tereus*, based on the myth.

Tetralogy the four plays, three tragedies (or tragic trilogy) and a satyr drama, that tragic poets entered in competition in the City Dionyia.

Theoric Fund established in either the fifth or fourth centuries in Athens, the fund paid the two obol fee for citizens who could not afford to attend the City Dionysia.

Tribe one of ten divisions created by Cleisthenes in Athens in the course of his democratic reforms. Each tribe had an eponymous hero and consisted of a combination of city, inland, and coastal demes. Each tribe anually contributed fifty members, drawn by lot, as members of the Council.

Trugaios either "Wine-lees-person," "Vintner" or "Tragi-comedian," the comic hero of Aristophanes' *Peace*.

Trugody or "trugodia," coined by Aristophanes but also used by Eupolis, a word combing *trux*, "wine-lees," with "tragedy" so pointing to a comic form of tragedy.

Xanthias "fair-haired," a common name for slaves in Classical Greece, used for many slaves in Aristophanic drama, notably Dionysus' slave in the *Frogs* (a forerunner of the "clever slave" of New Comedy).

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